

THE
SURE MERCIES
OF
DAVID:

Or, a Second Part of
HEART-TREASURE.

Wherein is contained the sum and substance of Gospel-mercies purchased by Christ, and Promised in the Covenant of Grace, together with the several ways how they are made sure to all the Heirs of Promise, and how they are to be improved for the Saints Fort and Defence, Settlement and Encouragement in shaking and back-sliding times.

Being the fruit of some Meditations
upon *Isa. 55. 3.*

By *O. Heywood* an unprofitable Minister of the Gospel.

Zech. 9. 11. As for thee also, by the blood of thy Covenant, I have sent forth thy Prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water

Evangelium est, seu vehiculum quoddam per quod ad nos deferitur Christus cum justitia sua & omnibus donis:
Luth. tom. 3. f. 428. a.

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To all the Heirs of Promise,
the Saints of the most high God, the
Sons and Daughters of Abraham,
whom God hath betrothed to himself
in the sweet Gospel-Covenant, and
who live in hopes of their nuptial day,
preparing in grace to enter into the
chambers of glory at death and the
general Resurrection, grace, mercy
and peace.

TWo things (my Dearly be-
loved in the Lord,) are
absolutely necessary to
make souls happy, 1. That the
thing possessed be fully adæquate
to the nature of the soul, 2. That
it be made over to it legally and
everlastingly : for if either any
thing be defective at present to
A 3 give

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give content, or there be danger of losing it, it is not commensurate to the souls state or need; for as this immortal spark infused into man, whereby he is a rational creature, is vast and capacious in its desires and dimensions; so it is very lasting, yea everlasting in its continuance and duration; therefore its riches that must make it happy must be both suitable and durable: But all the creatures fall short in both: the soul of man travelling through this spacious universe upon the feet of its affections, and following the guidance of the intellectual faculties the souls ear and eye, can get no satisfying sight or report in answer to that curious inquest, who will shew me any good? to fix upon the creature is to set our eyes upon that which is not, for its vanity; yea, to place our hopes
on

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on that which hath a lye in its right hand, and so becomes vexation of spirit in an astonishing disappointment: woe were to man if there were no hopes for him but in this life, and great were his infelicity if what Atheists say and think, that there is no God, were true, how poorly should this Princely thing in man be served with the sordid husks of creatures? how base and brutish would its life be? how well becoming man would that Epitaph be of the Epicure? which Cicero saith *was fitter to be writ on an Oxes grave than mans — Hæc habeo quæ edi, quæq; exsaturata libido — hausit: the things my greedy appetite hath devoured are mine, as they cry.* But let such Brutified Sots, that understand nothing of the worth or proper food of immortal souls, feed on husks, let the Hea-

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Numb. 11.

4, 5.

*Qui mundo
aahserunt
ut marinis
petris alga,
contemnunt
immortalita-
tatem sicut
Senex Itha-
censis, qui
non verita-
tem &
cæl stem
patriam,
eam que
vere est lu-
cem, sed fu-
mum opta-
bit. Clem.
Alexand.
adm ad
gen.*

ven-born Saints aspire to other
nourishment, if the mixed multi-
tude of common professors linger
after the *Ægyptian* food of Cucum-
bers, Melons, Leeks, Onions and Gar-
lick — the real Saints feed on
Heavenly Manna; the flesh and
blood of Christ is the proper pa-
bulum animæ, or nourishment of the
soul: the soul hath a more ten-
der appetite, which requires an-
swerable food; it cannot feed on
such course stuffe as worldly de-
lights: hear David begging as for
an alms, but what alms begs he? mer-
cies; but what mercies? tender mercies,
Psal. 40. 11. withhold not thy tender
mercies from me, O Lord — q. d.
there are common mercies, that
fill the bellies, and cloath the bo-
dies of good and bad, but these
will not serve my turn, nor save
my soul; the mercies that will
do me good for ever are tender
things,

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things of another stamp, that come streaming through the blood of a Mediator, that are dipt in Covenant-love, and such as can fill, and feed, and feast my soul for ever.

These are the mercies that God hath dropt into your bosoms; oh the heirs of promise, and these are the mercies described and deciphered in this Treatise, I have gone out to measure the Land of Promise, and according to grace received, I have viewed it in the length and breadth thereof, and I have no reason to bring up an evil report on it; it's a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, a blessed and beautiful Land, which God careth for, and if the Lord delight in you, he will bring you into it, what though there be Giants and Anakims of opposition in Heavens way, fear them not, for they

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they are bread for us, shall turn to the Saints nourishment, and their defence is departed from them; the Lord is with us, Let not our hearts faint, God will carry us as upon Eagles Wings, he will give us a pillar of Cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; sure mercies in the way, and everlasting mercies in the end: this is the true *Arabia felix*, yet far beyond that, which though it abounded with spices and gold, profits and pleasures, yet stupifies the senses of the inhabitants with its suffocating sweetness; but there's no nauseous disgusting of heavenly delights by those that partake thereof: the longer you enjoy them, the more you long after them, and the fuller draught you take, the sweeter relish they have: Oh the pleasure a soul may have in divine things!

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things! other things will stink in comparison of these ravishing delights: no pleasures like those that come from above: but that which adds an Emphasis to these is, that they are sure as well as sweet, abiding as well as abounding pleasures: God the Author and object of them is immutable, the spring of them, the love of God, the meritorious cause, Christs blood, the way of conveyance, precious promises, all these are settled and the same, as long as the soul needs mercies it enjoysthem, for we have grace to help in time of need: God will not, men cannot pluck away these mercies from you, you that have a well-grounded title thereunto: God will not; for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance; and whom he loves once he loves to the end: men
cannot

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*Sole & sale
omnia con-
servantur.*

cannot for they are above and beyond their reach : these mercies are made sure to you by a *Covenant of Salt*, which is a symbole of incorruption : they wear not away with length of time, nor are they snatcht away by humane violence : the Tyrants rage cannot pluck sure mercies out of your hearts & hands : this consideration is of singular use in a losing time ; men may take away our estates, liberties, priviledges, but they cannot take away our mercies : they may degrade us and remove us from our functions and offices, but cannot disettle our souls from relation to Christ, or state of grace, or blessed influences of grace. When Popish Bishops took from *John Husse* the Chalice, saying. Oh cursed *Judas* we take away from thee this Chalice of thy salvation, he answered, *but I*
trust

*Fox. Mart.
Vol. 1. p.
820.*

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trust unto God the Father omnipotent,
and my Lord Jesus Christ, for whose
sake I suffer these things, that he will
not take away the Chalice of his re-
demption, but have a stedfast and firm
hope, that this day I shall drink thereof
in his Kingdom : Yea, men may
take away the members of the
body, but not the graces and
comforts of the soul : Nota-

ble is the story
of Agatha the primi-
tive Martyr, who
when Quintilian had
commanded her
breasts to be cut off,
art thou not ashamed, O
Tyrant, said she, to cut
off that member in me,

which thou suckedst in thy mother ? but
go to, rage as much as thou canst, yet
two breasts are left, which thou canst
not touch, the one of faith, the other of
hope, these supply me with comfort and

safety

*Quintiliano dixisse ferunt ex cuius
iussu præcisæ sunt ipsi mam-
millæ, annon te pudet, Tyrone
membrum illud in me amputare,
quod in matre suxisti ? verum,
age sevi quantum poteris : due
tamen supersunt mammillæ, quas
nequis attingere, fidei una, sp̃s
altera, hæ mihi vel in mediis tor-
mentis solamen & tutamen suppe-
ditant & earum alimento sustinen-
di virtus in me reparatur —
Dr. Arrowf. Tacit. fac. p. 195.*

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*Omnia cum
aliis com-
munia ha-
bent tan-
quam ciues,
omnia pati-
untur tan-
quam pere-
grini: om-
nis peregrina
regio patris
est cor. m. &
omnis pa-
tria est pe-
regria,
Just. Mart.
ep. ad Dicg
vid. plura.*

safety in the midst of torments and abundant strength is repaired in me by the nourishment I have by them to endure. Alas, it were a sad state of an immortal soul to have nothing but what supplies corporal wants; how soon will worm, or moth, or fire, or thieves or tyrants, make a prey of visible riches? the good things of Saints are invisible: happy are you whose mercies are divine, you need not fear plundering or spoiling of your best goods; these are the true riches, though you be poor in this world, yet if you be rich in faith, you are heirs of a Kingdom; you live as strangers and Pilgrims, for your estates lye in another Countrey: and indeed a Christian is a Paradox in this, as Justin Martyr observes of the ancient Christians, that they inhabit their own Countrey but as strangers, they have all things common with others as Citizens,

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Citizens, yet suffer all things as Pilgrims, every strange Region is their Countrey, and every Countrey a strange Region: a Christians politicks are seemingly contradictory, and truly mysterious: they make a common table, yet not polluted: they are in the flesh, but live not after the flesh: they live on earth, but have their conversation in Heaven: they obey Laws established, yet by their way of living go beyond laws: they love all and are persecuted by all: they are not known, yet condemned: they are killed, yet made alive: they are poor, yet enrich many: they want all things, yet abound in all things: they are disgraced, yet thereby honoured, &c. Thus he proceeds, shewing the state of Christians; which is the same now: oh what a mysterie, yet felicity, it is to be a Saint! all things

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*Omnia cum
aliis con-
munia ha-
bent tan-
quam civis,
omnia pati-
untur tan-
quam pere-
grini: om-
nis peregrina
regio patris
est eorum, &
omnis pa-
tria est pe-
regrina.
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ep. ad Dicg.
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things are yours, though nothing were yours; a Saint by Covenant hath right to all, and shall have actual possession of what is for his good: the Saints rule the earth, themselves being trampled on by all: they pass through the world as Conquerours, and carry the spoils along with them as Trophies to death, and when death is swallowed up in victory, these blessed Champions arise triumphant in glory: Oh Christians, study your state, know your privileges, be always triumphing in Christ: live at the rate of these mercies, make no reckoning of the world but as a foot-stool to raise you higher God-wards, or as a stepping-stone to pass forward through this dirty world Heaven-wards, thereby: bless God for the least outward mercy, but be not put off with the greatest:

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est; a little with God is enough,
all things without God are no-
thing: suppose you be below
the higher part of the dust of the
earth in riches, power, and glory,
yet you are above them in grace,
true riches, and favour with the
God of Heaven: therein he makes
amends, as the Jews have a Fable
that the Waters Terrestrial, in the
beginning, took it ill they must be
divided from the Cœlestial by the
Firmament; he pacifies them by
promising a Sacred use of them
below in the Tabernacle of the
Covenant: so although you are
set below others in other things,
yet in this you have prehemi-
nence above them, that you are
interested in, and imployed about
these Covenant-mercies: this is
abundant compensation: be not
discouraged, whatever you suffer
here, 'tis not Hell, whatever you

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lose for God, Heaven will make amends; faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it: God is yet able to pay his debts, as able and willing, as to the first man that ever sued for performance of a promise: never any went away grumbling or charging God (as some men are too justly accused) that he minds not what he saith: when David through weakness of faith began to stagger, and expostulate, saying, doth his promise fail for evermore? he quickly checks himself with that reflection, And I said, this is my infirmity, Psal. 77. 8, 10.---

Optavim fidem tam certam & firmam esse quam & res ipsa, verum peccatum in carne resistit spiritui ut non possit firmiter credere, Luth.

It were a blessed thing (which Luther wisheth for) that our faith were as certain and firm as the thing it self believed, but alas, sin in the flesh doth resist the spirit, so as we cannot so firmly believe, as he complains: the way to stability

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stability is acting of faith, believe and ye shall be established; as long as we consult with reason, we shall still be fluctuating: persons expedient for establishment, after many temptations of doubt concerning a main article of faith was, an hearty humiliation and captivating his understanding to the obedience of faith: which brought such clear light of truth and certitude into his soul, that there remained no reliques at all of dubitation: we may all cry out with the Disciples, *Lord increase our faith*; alas, the want of faith is the root of all actual sins and insensibleness; yea, the want of a through perswasion of the reality of divine things, undoth the world; most men do but read the Gospel as a fine fiction, or a well-composed *Romance*, but work not their hearts to credit

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these things : a may be, or may not be, in a conjectural uncertainty is all they arrive unto; however they do not follow home the light and perswasions they have; alas, did souls seriously think of this, that as sure as they are men or women, as certainly as they eat and drink, work and sleep, so certainly there is a God, a Christ, grace, pardon, guilt, Heaven, Hell, which they must very shortly feel, this could not but have a strange influence upon their hearts and lives, their affections and conversations : oh what persons should Saints be, if they lived under the through impressions and convictions of the certainty of divine revelations.

It were a blessed effect if all the Treatises that have of late been writ, might convince this prophane and Atheistical world of the
the

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the certainty of Christianity, many have travelled much in this with good success ; several ancient writers as *Clemens, Polycarpus*, *Vid. Scult. med. patr. trum—* *Justinus Martyr, Tatianus, Irenæus, Athenagoras, Tertullian—* have proved by demonstrative arguments the truth of Christian Religion against Jews, Heathens, &c. and *Grotius, Morney—* of late : and at this day *Baxter, Stillingfleet, &c.* have put their sickle into this Harvest, from whom the Church hath reaped precious fruit : I pretend neither to the Learning or Authority of those famous Worthies, but insist only upon the Sure Mercies of the Covenant, as a poor Superstructure upon those Solid Foundations : it was the design of *Luke the Evangelist*, in Writing his Gospel to the noble and excellent *Theophilus*, that he might be assured of the certainty of

(a 3) those

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those things wherein he had been instructed, Luk. 1. 4. such a design have I in this small piece. Oh that some might stand out and say, as the Disciples, now we are sure that thou knowest all things — by this we believe that thou comest forth from God, Joh. 16. 30. oh sirs, stick not in an uncertain conjecture, arrive at a full assurance of understanding to the acknowledging of the myserie of God, Col. 2. 2. pray for the spirit of Revelation, that you may both know the certainty of Gospel-mysteries and mercies, and your own interest therein, that you may both be strong in faith and full of comfort : advance higher daily in embracing unseen things, rest not in a sceptical *ἐποχή* or Philosophical dubitation, but strive to arrive at an *ἐπαγὼς* or firm demonstration ; rest your souls upon

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upon Divine Testimonies, as to the object of faith, and commit your souls to him in believing and well-doing for evidence of your state : Remember that choice word, *Hos. 6. 3. then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain. unto the earth :* that this and all other soul-helps may accomplish this great end of your edification, consolation, and salvation, shall be the earnest Prayer of

*Your Soul-friend and
Servant in Christ.*

June 3.
1670.

O. H.

Upon giving Testimony, as to
 the object of kind, and commu-
 nicating to him in believing and
 well-doing for evidence of your
 state: Remember, that as the
 word, John 6. 2. then shall we know
 if we follow on to know the Lord, his
 going forth is prepared as the morning,
 and he shall come unto us as the rain,
 as the dew, and former rain unto the
 earth: that this and all other soul
 helps may accomplish this great
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 sation, and salvation, shall be
 cannot, I say of

Your Soul friend and
 Servant in Christ

O. M.



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ERRATA.

ERRATA.

P Age 25. line 16. read *good*, p. 93. l. 21.
add *which*, p. 112. marg. r. *discitur*, p. 132.
l. 8 add *in*, p. 135. l. 11. add *are*, p. 141.
l. 30. r. *himself*, p. 151. l. 26. add *him*, p. 182.
l. 8. r. *Children of the Kingdom*, p. 231. l. 30 r. *ne-*
cessary, blot out *un* —



THE
SURE MERCIES
OF
DAVID.

Isaiah 55. 8.
—Even the sure mercies of David.

CHAP. I.



His Evangelical Prophet acts the part of an Apostolical Preacher, deciphering our dear Saviour as lively as if he Writ an History not a Prophecy, as if he saw him in the Flesh and not in the Type only : This Chapter contains a sweet relation or revelation of the Mysteries of Gospel-Grace, an high-sounding proclamation, and patheticall Exhortation to
B the

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the sons of men to embrace the saving benefits purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Exhortation is pressed upon consciences with four Arguments, which are (as it were) a satisfying Answer to as many tacit Objections which may be made by unbelieving souls, these arguments are drawn from the

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Freeness, ver. 1. | } of Gospel-grace. |
| 2. Fulness, ver. 2. | |
| 3. Firmness, ver. 3. | |
| 4. Largeness, ver. 5. | |

1. A soul may say, Alas, I am an unworthy wretch, I have nothing that can commend me to God, I have neither penny, nor pennyworth, money, nor price to give, neither grace nor good work to bring to God, may I have a share in it? Yes, its free, come buy, for just nothing, ver. 1.

2. But may the soul say, if it be so cheap, it may be its of as little worth, too dear of taking *gratis*, things of light price are often of as light use, and answer their rate, by being unprofitable, will it do me any good? O yes, its of vast advantage; if you take pains for any thing else, you do but spend money for that which is no Bread, but if you obtain Gospel-Grace, *you eat that which is good, and your soul shall delight it self in fairness,* ver. 2.

3. But may I have a share in these Mercies, shall I not miss of them, and when I once have them shall I not lose them again? I am but

but galled if I see such sweet morsels and cannot reach them, and I shall be more miserable if I taste such pleasant dainties, and have them snatcht away : he answers to the first, *all shall be made over to you by a Covenant, and to the second they are the sure mercies of David,* ver. 3.

4. But, alas may a poor soul say, this is Childrens meat, what have doggs to do with these dainties, I am a sinner of the Gentiles, salvation is of the Jews, and for the Jews; is there any hope for such strangers to the Common-wealth of *Israel* ? Yes, Jesus Christ is given for a witness to the people, to all people, *i. e.* Gentiles, *a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee, shall run unto thee,* ver. 4, 5. Isa. 49. 6.

The Text falls under the third Argument, and contains,

1. A double duty, *hear, come,* *i. e.* believe, obey.

2. A double promise, of *life,* and *Covenant.*

1. *Your soul shall live;* life is the flower and foundation of all outward mercies, but spiritual life transcends a corporal temporal life, which is but a dying life, or living death; *Grace is the life of the soul.* Spiritual life is the seed-plot of eternal life in Glory : mankind lost life by hearing the charming temptations of the subtle Serpent : life is recovered by hearing the gracious words of life from Jesus Christ, *Hear, and your souls shall live.*

2. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you,* the words are in Hebrew, *I will cut a*

ואכרתה
לכם
ברית

*Perentiam
vobiscum
fœdus, q.d.
dividuntur
ejus membra
qui jura-
mentum vi-
olaverit.*

Covenant with you, the expression hath allusion to the ancient practice of entering Covenants, which was by cutting a Beast in two parts, and the parties Covenanting going betwixt those parts, to note that after that manner shall that mans members be divided that shall violate that solemn Covenant: See the practice, in *Gen. 15. 17, 18. Jer. 34. 18.*

Now the great Contents of this Covenant are expressed in these words which I have pickt out, and pitcht upon to speak fully to, *Even the sure mercies of David*: which contain,

1. The summ of the Covenant, *i. e. mercies.*
2. The nature of those mercies, *i. e. sure.*
3. The subject of the mercies, *David.*

There is not much difficulty in the words, only 'tis disputed what is meant by *David* here. Now in Scripture *David* is taken, 1. For literal *David*. 2. For mystical *David*, *Jesus Christ*: it may be applicable very properly both wayes here.

1. It may be taken for the person of *David* the Son of *Jesse*, King of *Israel*; and then the mercies of *David* are the choice promises that God made with his servant *David*, described in *2 Sam. 7. 13---17.* and in *Psal. 89.* Some make the first words of that *Psalme* to be the title of it, and render it thus, *I will sing of the mercies of David*, because Gods Covenant with *David* is abundantly held forth in that *Psalme*. But this phrase doth rather allude to *2 Chron. 6. 42.* where *Solomon* thus prays,

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prayer, Remember the mercies of David thy Servant.

2. By *David* is meant *Jesus Christ* who is of the seed of *David* according to the flesh, *Rom. 1. 3.* and called by this name of *Da-* *Act. 13. 23.* *vid* frequently in the Old Testament, as in *Ezek. 34. 23, 34. ch. 37. 24, 25. Hos. 3. 5.* and I do rather conceive this to be the meaning of the words, than the former, for these two reasons. 1. Because in the New Testament, where these words are quoted, the Holy Ghost applies it to *Jesus Christ, Act. 13. 34. I will give you the sure mercies of David*; indeed the Greek renders it different from the Original of the Old Testament, for thus they read it, *τὰ ὅσια Δαβὶδ τὰ πιστά*, according to the Septuagint: in English, *the faithful holy things of David*, but all comes unto one, for the mercies of the Covenant are holy things; But observe the scope of that quotation in the *Acts*, which is to prove *Christs Resurrection, for if Christ had not risen from the dead, the promises had not been made good*, so that still it relates to *Christ*. 2. Another consideration that moves me to conceive that by *David* here is meant *Jesus Christ*, is what follows in the fourth verse, *I have given him, (i.e. David before mentioned or Christ) for a witness to the people, (i.e. a witness to testify Gods veracity in performing all his promises;)* so then the words may be thus read, *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, according to the sure mercies of David, i.e. the Messiah, who is to come; the mercies*

before promised, and to be exhibited in and by him in the fulness of time : the words חֲסִדֵי דָוִד הַחַמְנִים are but few, being but three, yet they are full of sense and significancy, and are big-bellied, travelling with the precious mysteries of Gospel-grace.

I shall only name some Doctrinal-observations by the way from the Text, and pitch upon one.

Doct. 1. *The Covenant of Grace is made up of mercies, its a compound of mercies, the root, the branches, the top, the bottom of this Chariot is love, grace, grace, all free-grace.*

2. *Covenant-mercies are sure mercies, they are not like the uncertain riches of this world, the true treasure is a sure treasure, the better part that cannot be taken away.*

3. *The sure mercies of the Covenant are Davids portion : take David here literally and Saints in him, so it signifies beloved : all Gods Davids or beloved ones have right to Covenant-mercies.*

4. *Jesus Christ alone doth make sure all the mercies of the Covenant : so take it in the latter acceptation, as David imports the Messiah.*

I shall rather give you the substance of the Text, and the fore-mentioned Doctrines in this one Proposition.

Doct. *That Covenant-mercies made in Christ, are made sure by Christ to all the heirs of promise.*

The

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The mercies which the Messiah procureth and applyeth are sure mercies.

That the Covenant of Grace is made in Christ see, Isa. 49. 8. *I will preserve thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the people, i. e. the Mediatour of the Covenant*; so the Apostle expounds it, calling Jesus Christ, a *surety of a better Testament*, or Covenant, and again, he calls him the Mediatour of the New Testament; And as the promises are made good in Christ, so they are made good by Christ. 2 Cor. 1. 20. *for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us, i. e. they are ratified, confirmed, and applied by vertue of Christs own meritorious undertakings*: a full Text we have in Rom. 15. 8. Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers; hence it is that he hath sealed the Covenant, both by his person, actings, and sufferings, (as afterwards I shall particularly demonstrate) so that the mercies must needs be sure; David the subject of these mercies doth acknowledge the sureness of them, even in the Old Testament, in that famous Text, 2 Sam. 23. 5. *Althoough my house be not so with God, (i. e. for outward splendour, according to the description of a magnificent family, ver. 4.) yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure*; as if he should say, 'Tis true indeed, God hath performed his good word to me in making me King, but alas still my heart is full of corruptions,

Isa. 49. 8.

Heb 7 22.

Heb. 8 6.

Heb 9. 15.

and my house of distractions ; though the Sun be risen upon me, yet I cannot say its a morning without clouds ; 'tis sadly eclipsed and overcast with the obscuring clouds of temptations upon me ; I have committed grievous sins which darken my glory, damp my comfort : *Ammon* commits Incest with his Sister, *Absalon* Rebels against his Father : I am driven from my Throne and City, my whole Family is wofully broken, shattered and discomposed ; well, but I have a well-ordered Covenant, in the midst of all my disorder. When I am driven from mine own house, I am not sure that ever I shall return to it, but this Covenant is sure ; my outward condition is uncertain, but the best mercies of this blessed Covenant are so solid and substantial, that I am satisfied therewith ; if he deny me the temporal mercies therein contained, yet if I have the spiritual mercies thereof, that is enough for me, *for it is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow*, i. e. though his blessing upon my house be not as the tender grass, springing out of the earth by clear shining after the Rain, and so multiply my family, in making it either numerous or wealthy, potent or magnificent, I have all that I look for, and that which gives me content, I have these sweet and sure mercies of this blessed Covenant :

For the more distinct and profitable handling of this choice subject, I shall in the Doctrinal part open these four particulars or principal points, and endeavour to shew,

1. What

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1. What are the mercies of the Covenant?
2. In what respects they are said to be made sure?
3. By what wayes and means they are insured to us?
4. How they are said to be made sure in Christ.

CHAP. II.

1. **F**OR the first point, *What are the mercies of the Covenant*: and here I might prepare the way by declaring what a Covenant is, and give some description of this New Covenant, and distinctions about it; but I shall rather wave that, because it's so abundantly done already by so many able hands. Only for our present purpose, take notice, that in all Contracts or Covenants, yea in any ordinary Conveyance, there are four things very considerable, yea and essentially requisite. 1. There is the parties Covenanting. 2. The Consideration paid, or laid down. 3. The conditions required and performed. 4. The tenour and graunt in which it runs, or the privilege to be enjoyed, upon the conditions, and consideration, called in our writings the *habendum*, or the thing that we must have and hold:

Mr. Herle
his Christian
Wisdom, chap.
4. p. 227.

Now all these are either expressly or implicitly held forth in one Scripture, which is Heb. 8. 10. 1. There is the parties Covenanting, I and the house of Israel, [*this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel.*] 2. Here is the consideration evidently implied

Heb. 8. 10.

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implied in these words, [*after those days*] i.e. after those dayes of Types, Shadows, and Prophecies, in the fulness of time, the Messiah shall come, who is the substance, and will satisfy divine justice, and make an Attonement.

3. Here is the condition of the Covenant, plainly expressed in these words, [*I will put my Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*] i.e. I will give that which I require, I will put within them a principle of Grace that they may love me, believe in me, repent for sin, and obey the Gospel: that's the third. 4. Here's the grant, or good to be enjoyed, which is the end and result of all the former, viz. [*I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,*] i.e. whatsoever I am, or have, or can do, who am omnipotent, shall be employed for their good; or whatsoever they would choose a God for, or desire to be in a God, that will I be to them, with whom I contract this Covenant, and I will own them as my peculiar people. Now the mercies of the Covenant consist in these four particulars, especially in the last.

I shall a little open these, that we may the better find out the mercies wrapt in the Covenant of Grace.

1. The parties that enter this Covenant, are God, and man; Oh the infinite distance and vast disproportion! *quantus quantillo?* Heaven makes a match with earth, the great Creator with a mortal creature, the glorious King with a silly beggar! is not this a rich mercy? shall the Cedar in *Lebanon* contract a
League

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League not only with the contemptible shrub, but with the pricking offensive thistle? shall the Sun of Righteousness convey beams of love to such worthless worms, yea to such stinking dung-hills? shall the beauty of holiness be confederate with sorry man who is but a lump of vanity or mass of impurity? Yet thus it is, and this is transcendent mercy; there's mercy in a Covenant, God might have dealt with man in a way of absolute sovereignty, and done with man even as he pleased, without giving us account of his matters; but he treats with man in a rational way, above the capacity of other creatures: God takes man up to parly and treat with him, as though he were his equal, *what is man that* Psal. 8. 4. *thou art thus mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him?* this mutual stipulation is infinite condescension on Gods part, and advancement on mans: man, only man of all the Creatures is the subject of this Covenant, Angels had no need of it, Devils had no hope by it, brut Creatures were not capable of it, only man, and fallen man hath interest in it, and benefit by it. Oh the mercy there is in a Covenant of reconciliation! even after man had turned bankrupt, spent a fair estate, broken Covenant, and brought himself into a desperate case, that yet God should forget what was past, enter into a new and better Covenant, betrust him with a new stock, and yet lay help (not upon foolish mans weak shoulders, but) upon one that's mighty to save? Oh rich, O transcendent

scendent Love! this leads us to the second thing in this Covenant.

Joh. 4. 10.

2. The consideration paid, that's Jesus Christ, and he is eminently the gift of God, such a gift as never came out of the hands of God, and was never received by the hands of mortal man, a rich and enriching gift, a gift proceeding from love, *so God loved the world, that he gave his Son*, Joh. 3. 16. Christ is several wayes a gift, 1. *Nobis*, to us, 1 Cor. 1. 30. *who of God is made unto us wisdom.* 2. *Pro nobis*, for us, Gal. 2. 20. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* 3. *Præ nobis*, before us, as an example, copy and pattern, as he suffered for us, so he left us an example, 1 Pet. 2. 21. 4. *In nobis*, in us, *so Christ is said to dwell in our hearts by faith*, Eph. 3. 17. thus Christ is given to believers by sanctification, and inhabitation of his spirit. Now, 'tis the second way principally whereby Christ is the consideration or price paid in this new Covenant, *viz.* as he is given for us, a valuable consideration to pacifie wrath and satisfie justice: thus is Jesus Christ the *Lutron* or price of our Redemption, *we are bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. such a price as never was paid, men pay money to purchase great possessions, *but we were not redeemed with corruptible things as Silver and Gold—but with blood, yea with the precious blood of Christ*, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. without shedding of blood there could be no remission, yet the blood of Bulls or Goats could never take away sin; nay the blood of all the men upon earth could never

Heb. 9. 22,
12.

never wash away the guilt of the least sin; no no, it must be the blood of the immaculate Lamb, the blood of God; so called from the union of the two natures, and communication of idioms or properties: and this is the price paid, the Father found out a ransom, and our dear Saviour gave himself a ransom; certainly this is a transcendent mercy of the New Covenant. I dispute not those nice Controversies, whether God could not have pardoned and saved man without the consideration of Christs undertakings; or how God in justice can charge guilt and torment upon an innocent person; this I am sure is Gods way of saving souls, and we must not dispute but believe, that Jesus Christ is the Mediatour of the Covenant, and the price of our Redemption, as God-man; and this is the Marrow of the rich mercy and deep mysterie contained in the Gospel.

3. In a Covenant is contained the conditions thereof; what God requires of us, without which we can have no benefit by the Covenant; these also are to be reckoned as mercies of the Covenant on Gods part, as well as duties on our part, for they are secured and effected in us, as well as commanded and required by God. Luther makes this to be the main difference betwixt the two Covenants; the Covenant of works requires obedience but gives no strength; but the Covenant of Grace ingageth the Grace of God for the Elects performance of the conditions; hence it is, that what the

1 Tim. 2.6.

*Quod lex
imperat,
gratia impe-
trat: Evan-
gelium dat
quod lex
exigit:
Aug. de
spir. & lit-
tera—*

*Duce D'o
venitur ad
deum.*

*Heb. 12. 2.
Eph. 1. 19.*

the Law commandeth, the Gospel promi-
seth; what God requireth, Christ procureth;
what justice demandeth, our dear saviour pur-
chaseth and worketh by his spirit in the heart:
faith is the great Gospel-condition, where-
by Christ with all his benefits become ours,
but faith is the gift of God, and none can come
to Christ, except the Father draw him, Joh.
6. 44. Alas it is as impossible to believe in
Christ as to keep the Moral Law from princi-
ples of corrupted nature; our state had been
sad, and forlorn still, if God had not under-
taken to work the faith which he requireth;
'tis only the arm of omnipotency that can
draw the soul to Christ, Jesus is the only Au-
thor and finisher of our faith, there is an ex-
ceeding greatness of his power to all them
that believe put forth to create an act of sa-
ving faith; all they that have felt it, can testi-
fie that this is a rich mercy, and this is
one of the mercies of the Covenant.

More particularly there are four choice
dispositions promised in the Covenant of
Grace, which are Covenant-mercies.

1. Saving illumination, Jer. 31. 34. *they shall
all know me saith the Lord*; by nature we are
blind and blockish creatures, but the new Co-
venant brings light and sight to the ignorant &
erring sinner; and Oh what a mercy is it to
know God and Christ, and sin and misery,
and duty and felicity, to know Scripture-
truths and Gospel-mysteries, our own hearts
and the sweetness of Grace; heaven and the
way thither? certainly such saving knowledge

is worth a world : truly such light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eye of the soul to behold the Sun of Righteousness ; and the beauty of Heaven : what blind *Bartimeus* would not own it as a rich mercy to have his eyes opened ? and is it not a blessed thing to be translated out of Egyptian darkness into this marvelous light ? Oh happy are the eyes that are annointed with the new-covenant eye-salve , and behold Coelestial objects through this Divine optick of faith, and become faithful guides to the feet of an holy life !

2. Sound humiliation, this is another Covenant-mercy, Ezek. 11. 19. — *I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh : a broken heart is instead of many Sacrifices ; an hard heart is the greatest judgement, and a soft heart the greatest mercy ; repentance is Gods gift bound up in the Covenant of Grace : our sweet and blessed Redeemer is exalted as well to be a Prince that he may give Repentance, as to be a Saviour to give unto us remission of sins : Oh what a mercy is the spirit of Repentance ? they that have this Godly sorrow shall never need to sorrow for it ; such a Repentance needs not to be repented of : blessed are they that mourn for sin, for they shall rejoyce ; happy such as sow in tears, for they shall reap in joy ! certainly a Converted sinner looks upon a repenting heart as a rich mercy : one penitent tear is an orient pearl, of more worth than the whole Creation, a bleeding soul*

soul is a blessed sight in the eyes of God and man, it layes the Christian under the promise of the Covenant, and qualifies it for remission and the sweetest consolation.

3. Another Covenant-mercy with respect to the condition is heart-sanctification, Ezek. 36. 25. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean*; this is the mercy that David is so importunate for, *create in me a clean heart*, no less than creation will effect it; a putting off the old man, and putting on the new in a sound Regeneration, is a miraculous mercy. Oh what would a poor soul give for dominion over some special corruptions, and power to resist temptations; why here it is, this mercy of mortification (which is also a Christians duty) is infolded in this blessed Gospel-Covenant, so that sin shall not have Dominion over them that are under this Covenant of Grace: a Christian can do more to mortifie sin, and Crucifie the flesh than another man; every word of God hath a cleansing vertue, *now you are clean*, saith Christ, *through the word that I have spoken to you*; but the promises of the Covenant have a direct and immediate tendency to cleansing, 2 Cor. 7. 1. *having these promises, (i. e. the fore-mentioned Covenant) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit*: it is only the Gospel-Covenant that can make Evangelically holy: and holiness is the image of God, the beauty of a soul, the duty of a Christian, and the mercy of the Covenant.

4. A spiritual conversation ; this is also included in the Covenant, Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my Commandments and do them* : Oh what a blessed thing is it to have a heart to love, and fear, and serve the Lord ? Oh what a mercy to be enabled to perform holy duties ; to walk with God in all ways of well-pleasing ! to have the Law of God written in the heart, and transcribed in the life ! yea to keep Gods commands with ease, alacrity, and complacency, not to have them grievous but pleasant to the soul ; and thus it is when the Christian acts from an innate principle of Grace and Holiness : well, this is the promised and purchased condition of the New Covenant ; God undertakes to put a new habit into the soul, his fear which is the beginning of Wisdom, and principle of obedience : God gives the spirit of prayer, the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind ; he promiset^h to give 2 Tim. 1. 7. them one heart and one way, that they may fear him for ever : Oh what rich mercies of Jer. 32. 39. the New Covenant are these ?

4. Yet the great mercies of the Covenant are behind, under the next head, for a Covenant, contract, conveyance contains the *Habendum* or grant, reflecting advantage to the party Covenanting, and that in these words, *I will be thy God*, this is repeated fifteen or sixteen times in the Scriptures : this, this is the mercy of the New Covenant, the mercy of mercies, the flower, cream and quintessence

*Deus in us
est omnia.
Ben scrip-
sisti Thoma
q id pet.
Resp. nil
nisi recipsum
Domine.*

*Relativa
sunt minime
entitatis,
maxime
vero effica-
cie.*

essence of all mercies, God gives himself to the soul by Covenant, and what greater or better gift can he bestow ? if he should give us all the world and deny himself, we are miserable beggars ; if he give himself and nothing of the world we are truly rich ; if we have God we have all things, if we want God we want all things : my God is my All, saith one, 'tis recorded of *Thomas Aquinas* (the great School-man) that a voice from Heaven spake thus to him, *thou hast well written Thomas, what desirest thou,* and that he answer thus, *nothing O Lord, but thy self* : this certainly is the Language of a gracious soul, Lord put me not off with any thing below or besides thy self : what mortal Creature durst have presumed to beg of God such a boon, if God had not graciously promised himself in the New Covenant ? what can the creature desire more ? what can it now want when it hath an infinite God ? all that God is, hath, or doth is now imployed for the souls good, all his attributes and the good of them are laid out for the Covenanted soul : this word, *my Lord and my God*, ecchoing to the other relative, *I will be thy God*, are wonderful sweet , as they use to say of the pronoun *my*, or *mine*, that though it be of the least entity, yet it is of the greatest efficacy, suppose a man could with one cast of his eye take a view of the perfections of the whole Creation ; what were all these things to him if he have no interest in them ? a clear title to a good thing compleats the comfort we have

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have therein ; if God were not our God we could have no comfort from thoughts of him, what is God (saith one) if he be not my God ? if he be not our friend, he will be our enemy, and we had better have the whole Creation against us, than one God against us : and if God be for us, who can be against us ?

Quid est Deus, si non sis meus ?

Now in the Covenant of Grace God undertakes to be our God, and this is properly that which this Text intends, called *the sure mercies of David*, not in the singular but the plural number, as I conceive, for these two reasons ; 1. Because God is the fountain, spring, and original of all mercies, *all my springs are in thee* ; saith David, hence God is said to be

Psalm 86. 5, 15.

plenteous in mercy, and he is the Father of mercies : all mercies are virtually, eminently, and transcendently in God, and he that hath him that hath all things, hath all things himself. 2. Because the Covenant is big-bellied, it contains all mercies in it, when any one is entered into Covenant behold a Gad, a Troop, a Train of Mercies wait upon him ; the Covenant is a blessed constellation, and all the Stars of Gospel-promises do lend their aid to beautifie the Covenanted soul.

Habet omnia qui habet habent omnia.

Take a taste of the mercies of the Covenant in both these respects ; as

1. What God is to the soul, and so what mercies are bound up in the Covenant ; in that respect, this take in four particulars :

1. God is all sweet relations to the soul interested in ; he is a Father to them, 2 Cor. 6. 18. an Husband, *thy maker is thine Husband,*

Psalm 103. 13. Mal. 3. 17.

band, Isa. 54. 5. *a near and bosome friend*, Jam. 2. 23. *Abraham* was called the friend of God, so consequently God was his friend; for this Covenant begets and contracts the most endeared bond of intimate friendship betwixt God and the soul, and if there can be any relation, yet that holdeth forth more tenderness of affection; that and much more is God to the gracious soul, *as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you*, Isa. 66. 13. may the Scripture doth testify more affectionate workings in Gods heart towards his people than can be found in the most indulgent Parents to their Natural off-spring: the sweetness of all relations proceed from God, therefore to be found in God: our relative affection is but a drop to this Fountain, and our content in relations is no otherwise sweet than as flowing from him, or with relation to him: that's the first, God in Covenant is the quintessence of all relations.

2. God is all things, pleasant, desirable and honourable; hence we are bidden to taste and see how good the Lord is, and to delight our selves in the Lord, and at his right hand there are everlasting pleasures; he, he alone is the center and settlement of our desires, he alone is the rock and rest of the fluctuating soul, therefore David doth charge his soul to return to God as his rest: God only is the Sabbath and solace of the Christians soul: the Heaven of that Heaven of Heavens is Communion with God: no desires so insatiable but may be satisfied with an infinite

infinite God ; if regularly carryed out towards him, Oh what a blessed thing is it to have God to be the object of our delight ! and he alone is our glory and honour, the God of Heaven is the King of Glory, and he alone is the Glory of a people or person, the only Ornament to have a God in Covenant, Isa. 28. 5. *when the glorious beauty shall be as a fading flower— then shall the Lord of Hosts be for a Crown of Glory (instead of their Crown of pride, ver. 3.) and for a Diadem of beauty to the residue of his people :* Oh blessed and beautiful Ornament !

Psal. 3. 3.
Psal. 24. 10.

3. God is all things for safety and defence to his covenanted people, he is a *Sun* and a *Shield*, a Sun to direct in times of darkness, a Shield to protect in times of danger : there are seven words in *Psal. 18. 2.* that set forth this self-same thing what a Protection God is to his Children. 1. *A Rock.* 2. *A Fortress.* 3. *A Deliverer.* 4. *A Strength.* 5. *A Buckler.* 6. *The Horn of his Salvation.* 7. *His High Tower :* every one of these hath its peculiar Emphasis and Significancy ; I cannot take notice of them all, only hint at the first and last, a *Rock* (you know) is a natural defence, a *Tower* is an artificial defence, God is both (in a fort) by way of Covenant, in the first respect as our God and Creator, in the second as God-man, Mediator, appointed to be the only succour and shelter of fallen mankind ; here we may be safe and free from the roaring *Lion*, the ravening *Bear* and uncircumcised *Philistin* : he alone is an hiding place

Psal. 84. 9.
91. 11.

from the wind, a covert from the tempest
 —and as the shadow of a great rock in a
 weary land, Isa. 32. 2. An admirable place
 you have in Jer. 17. 2. *a throne, a glorious
 Throne, and a glorious high Throne*; and this
 from the beginning is the place (not only of
 our defence, but) of our sanctuary: every
 word hath its proper weight, who dare pre-
 sume to meddle with a Throne or to surprize
 a Sanctuary? the Glory whereof will affright
 and appal them; it's an high Throne, how can
 they reach it? it is from the beginning, the
 ancient of dayes, and so to everlasting, and
 what mortal man can lay siege to this so im-
 pregnable a Tower? the eternal God is the
 Deut. 33. 27. Saints refuge, and underneath them are ever-
 lasting armes, therefore are they safe from
 total falling, and fear of desperate evils: that's
 the third.

4. God is all things for profit, advantage
 and usefulness to the Saints, 'tis said, *money
 answers all things*, but God is better than
 money, and answers all things, as a preci-
 ous Saint used to say, God's good, when
 gold's gone: no gain in the world like that
 that God is to the soul, God is our riches,
 treasure, portion, inheritance, and our all in
 all, David saith, Psal. 73. 25, 26. *whom have
 I in Heaven but thee?* and then saith, *my flesh
 and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of
 my heart, and my portion for ever*: God
 is fitly called the Saints portion, for he
 is so one Saints portion, as if no one
 else, and yet intirely every ones, as if wholly
 theirs,

theirs, as indeed he is, yet without division, partition, or diminution. That's a notable passage in that Gospel-Covenant, (at least one part of it, the mercy in it we are speaking of) Gen. 15. 1. *fear not Abram, I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward:* 1. Thy reward, as if it were (as indeed it is) reward enough to have God, if we have nothing else. 2. A great reward worth speaking of, not an inconsiderable trifle but a great reward. 3. An exceeding great reward, no hyperbole can reach it, much less exceed it, none can express the goodness of God, but those that experience it, nor can they sufficiently declare it, but is he mine? Yes. 4. By this Covenant he is thy exceeding great reward; *Blessed are they that are in such a case, Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*

Christus & Caelum non patitur hyperboliz.

Psal. 144. 15.

Thus I have shewed what God is.

2. I shall a little shew what God gives and grants to the covenanted soul; there are many rich benefits, and advantages, which are indeed rich Covenant-mercies.

1. Pardon of sin, Jer. 31. 34. ——— for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more: and oh what a mercy is pardon of sin? ask David when he is roaring under his broken bones, and disquiet spirit, whether pardon of sin be a mercy, he will answer yes, O yes, I know it, and could even envy the happiness of a pardoned sinner; *blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, yea many times blessed is he to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity: this is a mercy that cost*

Psal. 32. 1, 2.

a great rate, even the blood of the immaculate Lamb of God, 'tis a mercy that God sheweth for his own sake ; a mercy that easeth the guilty soul of an heavy burden, a mercy that hath sweet and satisfying concomitants : Oh the riches of this mercy.

2. Gods favour, love and tender compassion, Jer. 32. 40, 41. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good — Yea I will rejoyce over them to do them good; q. d.* now I am in Covenant with them I will seek and study by all means to promote their spiritual and eternal advantage ; yea and their temporal good also ; I will be a fast and faithful friend to them ; all my attributes shall contribute their assistance to help on the design of mercy towards them : and what God doth for them is with his whole heart and with his whole soul, he will in the relation of a Father take care of his Children : and is not that a mercy ?

3. Gospel Ordinances ; Ezek. 37. 26, 27. *I will make a Covenant of peace with them — and will set my Sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore — my Tabernacle also shall be with them: i. e.* they shall have the means of Grace, the visible tokens of Gods presence, wayes of Communion with God, and is not this a rich mercy ; David looketh upon it as so in his banishment from Gods house, and every Child of God prizeth it at a very high rate, this is one of the mercies of the Covenant.

4. Seasonable afflictions, with a sanctified use

use of them : Psal. 89. 30, 32, 33. *if his Children forsake my Law—— then will I visit their transgressions with the rod* : 'tis infinite mercy that God will take the pains to whip the offending Children: it is faithfulness to the great ends of the Covenant that God will fetch in his wandring sheep by sharpest means : it is (as it were) a cruel mercy to let men alone in sin to hasten their ruine : it is the Fathers care and kindness to chide and correct his son, and it's as needful as food and raiment ; a Child of God would rather be scourged to God, than allured from God in the paths of honey and butter : this Covenant-mercy doth change the nature of the affliction, and makes every thing to work for the souls best God: this bitter potion is an useful healing medicine ; this stinging Serpent is turned into an harmless, nay helpful Rod, with which the Lord works wonders of mercy upon and for the Covenanted soul.

But time would fail me to enumerate the large Catalogue of Covenant-mercies: from this fountain stream, those choice mercies of reconciliation with God, filiation, the spirit of adoption, free admission to the Throne of Grace, acceptance of their persons, audience of their Prayers, assurance of Gods love, peace of Conscience, communion of Saints, the benefits of Christs Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, an interest in all the Promises, Christs purchases, the spirits motions and comforts, freedom from the wrath of

of God, the curse of the Law, and eternal death, and lastly, an interest in, and at death a full possession of the inheritance of the Saints in light: these and such like are the mercies of the Covenant; in a word, all the goodness that is in God, and all the good things of the world, that are communicable to the elect, are to be accounted as the *sure mercies of David*: That's for the first general head.

CHAP. III.

2. **I**N what respects these mercies of the Covenant are made sure: for this observe, that there are some things absolutely and unchangeably sure, as to their own nature by an intrinsecal necessity; thus Gods immutable essence is fixed; with him there is no variableness nor shadow of change: thus though the Heavens perish yet God endures, *he is still the same and his years have no end*, Psal. 102. 24. ——— 27. thus God alone is the certain and unmoveable center of the whole Creation; he is the Rock of Ages, originally, infinitely, and independently sure, and so is nothing besides: other things are sure *jure positivo*, not of themselves, but by virtue of Gods appointment and designation, invariable, irrevocable, so as it shall not be altered, otherways ordered, no new way contrived to save lost man; thus the Scriptures are sure for ever,

The Sure Mercies of David.

27

O Lord thy Word is sealed in Heaven, and our Saviour saith, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled; and this way is the Covenant of Grace, sure not of any intrinsecal necessity, resulting from its nature, but free to be or not to be as the infinite God sees good; as a Covenant it depends meerly on Gods free-grace for making it, God might have forborn re-entring this New Covenant, but have dealt with man as with the lapsed Angels; or he might have reserved to himself a power of revocation, to have called in his patent, and shut up his Office of mercy, but now God hath fixed this as the only and everlasting way of Salvation: thus this Covenant is as sure as that the World shall no more be totally drowned with Water, yea as sure as the standing of the lasting Mountains and Hills; yet further, as sure as the Ordinances of Sun by day, Moon and Starrs by night, nay once more it's as possible that the Heavens should be measured by the short span of a mortal man, or the foundations of the earth searched out, as for the great and unchangeable God to violate this Gospel-Covenant with his dear *Israel* of elect souls: Read this fully in *Isa.* 54. 9, 10. *Jer.* 31. 35, 36, 37.

Psal. 119.
89.
Mat. 5. 18.

But yet more particularly, this Covenant and these mercies of it, may be made sure two wayes to believers; viz.

1. Intallibly, so as not to miss of,
2. Immutably, so as never to lose these mercies.

1. These

1. These mercies of the Covenant are sure infallibly, i. e. there is a certain number of elect selected souls set apart by the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth to eternal happiness by our Lord Jesus Christ, and these shall have interest in and possession of the fore-mentioned mercies of *David*: that God hath chosen some to life as the end, and through Christ as the way of attaining that end is clear in Scripture; Ephes. 1. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him*—— and ver. 5. *having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself*: and 1 Thes. 5. 9. *for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*: electing and redeeming love are of the same latitude and extent; whom God the Father had in his Council, God the Son bore upon the bitter Cross: and those that are ordained to eternal life shall believe, Act. 13. 48. Which Text, saith Calvin, teacheth, that saving faith depends upon Gods eternal election; hence also faith is called *the faith of Gods Elect*, Tit. 1. 1. because all the Elect, and none but the Elect obtain it; for all men have not faith, it is peculiar to these selected persons. Besides, God hath laid the plot and platform of mans salvation upon the sure foundation of his own free-grace, on purpose to make these things firm and sure to elect souls, so that their unworthiness shall not hinder the certain execution of his eternal Decrees, Rom. 4. 16. *therefore it is of faith that it might be*

by

by Grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, i. e. that the Covenant with all the mercies of it might be made good to all the heirs of promise : the election, (or elect souls) hath obtained it, but the rest are blinded, Rom. 11. 7. hence, saith the Apostle, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are his* : he knows these sheep even before they know themselves, according to his sure election before the foundation of the world : hence also, God would not have the enjoyment of these mercies to depend upon mans sorry, mutable, and inconstant will, nor upon any works wrought by man, as the whole strain and tenour of the Gospel holds forth : and indeed if the whole fire lay on mans free-will, it would bring us back to a Covenant of Works ; and if it were possible for any to attain these, that man were the casting cause of his own salvation, and then what need of any Redeemer ? besides, it might so fall out, (yea and would certainly) that these mercies might be applied to none, for (*conditio nihil ponit in esse*) that which is not effectual without a contingent condition upon which it depends, the particular motion of this mans will, and so of others towards God, and closing with promises (being in his own choice) is doubtful and uncertain, and so must needs be the privileges which depend upon that condition : therefore they that make these mercies possibly every ones, make them certainly no ones :

*Dico, novit Dominus qui sunt ejus, ipse oves aliquando se-
ipfas nesciunt, sed pastor novit eas, secundum electionem ovium ante constitutionem mundi.
Aug. in Joh. 10.*

ones: the truth is, God hath not left the enjoyment of these Covenant-mercies to the choice or refusal of the fickle or inconstant will of the creature at his pleasure, but (though he doth not violence to the will, but of unwilling makes it willing) God himself and Jesus Christ by the holy Spirit hath engaged himself to bring souls home by converting grace certainly and infallibly, though sweetly and suitably to the nature of a rational creature: hence effectual calling and stating the elect in these mercies is not left to rovers, may-bees, or hap-hazard, but it's past beyond all peradventure; so that there's a Must, and Shall annexed to it, Joh. 10. *no other sheep I have ——— them also I may bring, and they shall hear my voice*

Joh. 6. 37. *All that the father giveth me (i. e. by election) shall come to me, (i. e. by faith and repentance:)* the God of Heaven hath engaged himself for it, and he is a God of truth to make good his word, and of infinite power, and he works and who can he it: *he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*, Eph. 1. 11. All that God the Father hath given to Christ in the free election, the Son hath undertaken to bring to glory by his mediatory administration: this is the first, these mercies are sure infallibly, the heir of glory shall partake of them.

Videfis
Ames Coron.
ad Coll.
Hag. adv. r.
ius Remens.
Artic. prim.
de electione.
Cap. 4.---
P. 15. &c.

2. They are sure immutably, not any that do partake of these mercies shall ever lose them: they shall alwayes have them and shall

never

The Sure Mercies of David.

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never be deprived of them : there are indeed some common gifts of the spirit that God may revoke and take away, as the gifts that *Saul* had ; but these gifts of Grace and this effectual calling are without repentance, *Rom. 11. 29.* he will never repent of, or retract these precious donations, *Mary's* better part shall never be taken from her ; worldly riches may be lost, but spiritual mercies are durable riches : God the Author of these mercies is immutable, with him there is no variableness nor shadow of change : he receives no variation from the contingent events of second causes : *the Lord will not forsake his people for his great names sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make them his people, 1 Sam. 12. 22.* he hateth putting away, he will not dis-inherit his Children for misdemeanours, he knows their frame, sees and pitties their weaknesses, raiseth them out of falls, and heals their back-slidings : Christ Jesus the purchaser of these mercies is the *Amen*, the faithful and true witness, the same yesterday, today, and for ever : mighty to save, a merciful and faithful high-Priest : none can pluck them out of his hands : he will lose none of these that his father hath given him : he will save to the uttermost : This our *Joshua* will bring the elect souls to the *Canaan* of eternal rest : The principle of Grace, and these mercies themselves are of a durable nature ; Grace is an immortal seed, a never-dying root, *principium continuativum*, *Joh. 7. 38.* He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of

Rev. 3. 14.
Heb. 13. 8.
Isa. 63. 1.
Joh. 10.
28, 29.
Joh. 17.

Prov. 10.

25.

1 J. h. 2. 17.

of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: though Grace is loseable in its own nature, yet not in event, because God upholds it: the house built on the rock shall stand immovable, the righteous is an everlasting foundation: he that doth the will of God abides for ever: yea he hath eternal life abiding in him: But may not they depart from God? no not totally and finally, for God hath put his fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from him, Jer. 32. 40. they may sin and provoke God to withdraw the sense of his love, they may lose their standing, comforts, and some degrees of Grace, but never be stripped naked wholly of these sure mercies of David; God hath secret hold of them, and they have more hold of him than others have; they are restless and dissatisfied till they enjoy God, and these mercies be clear to them: this Golden Chain stretcheth it self from everlasting, it begins in free Election, and ends in final salvation, whom he predestinates them he calls, justifies, glorifies, Rom. 8. 29, 30. it is horrid sacrilege to pluck one link from this golden Chain; God is the finisher as well as the Author of faith: it is not within the compass of any finite being to rob a gracious soul of the love of God, or stop the channel of his Free-Grace to the Covenanted soul: Paul can make a bold and brave challenge, Rom. 8. 35, 38, 39 *Who shall separate us from the love of God?* and he makes a sufficient enumeration of all things that were likely to conquer the believing soul, and yet concludes,

concludes, that in all these things we are more than conquerours through Christ; there are in the word sweet promises that may answer all Arminian Cavils and unbelieving fears concerning perseverance, which many choice champions have produced and managed with dexterity and success: See Mr. Prins Treat of Perseverance; Dr. Prid. Lect. 7. De perseverantia. Dr. Ames Coron. Artic. 5. De perseverantia.

CHAP. IV.

3. THE third Head to be opened is more particularly to shew what is the way of making sure these Covenant-mercies, how God doth it; Now there are several steps of making a thing sure amongst men, and God hath used the same means (and some degrees more) to make these mercies sure to the Children of men.

1. Men are wont to pass their word; When they promise any thing upon the word of an honest man, they expect credit; and among men this is current, and the God of Heaven is worthy to be believed upon his bare word (if I may so speak) for he is a God that cannot lye nor deny himself, yea let God be true and every man a liar; even a Balaam is convinced of it, and must profess it, Numb. 23 19. God is not a man that he should ly — hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?

D

the

the unchangeable God hath ingaged his Word in the New Covenant: the Patriarchs of old gave credit to all that God spake by dreams, visions and revelations, as *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*.

Hence

Neb. 9. 38.

We make

a sure Co-

venant, and

write it.

2. Men use to give greater evidence by subscribing their hand, and putting their mind and promise into Writing; hence the expression and practice of giving Letters of credence, and we use to say men are mortal, give it me under your hand, that will abide, (*for* *litera scripta manet*:) well, our gracious God hath condescended to subscribe his promise under his own hand, the hand of his blessed Spirit; the word of God is upon record, *therefore whatsoever was written, it is for our learning* (I may add *satisfaction*) *that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*, *Rom. 15. 4.* he hath given assurance to us of these things in the word of truth, *for this cause was the Gospel written, that we may know the certainty of these things*, *Luk. 1. 4.* *that we might believe*, *Job 20. 31.* who dare now dispute or doubt of the truth and sureness of Gospel-promises? since *Heaven and Earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled*, *Mat. 5. 18.*

Deut. 19.

15.

3. Men use to call in Witnesses for further confirmation; some important businesses require several witnesses, its a standing rule, *as the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the matter be established*; well, the God of Heaven hath confirmed his Gospel to us by three and three witnesses,

Witnesses, there's three in Heaven, the glorious persons of the Blessed Trinity, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and these three are one, one in essence, though three persons, 1 *Job*. 5. 7. these bear Record of Christs God-head; and there are three that bear witness in earth, ver. 8. these testify of Christs manhood, the *Spirit*, i. e. say some, his breathing out his soul and spirit in his giving up the Ghost, and *water*, and *blood*, that came out of his side when it was pierced with a spear; that shew he was real man, and that he did really dye; *Aretius* interprets these three latter of the spirit in the Ministry of the Word, the Water of Baptism, and the Blood of the Lords Supper representing Christs meritorious Blood-shed, and still this interpretation further confirms the Gospel-Covenant, and consequently the mercies of it.

*Hanc senior
sententiam
hoc loco, nec
puto alian
posse adduci
veriozem.*

*Aretius in
loc.*

*See Mar'o's
rate in loc.*

4. Men use to give assurance to others by setting to their seal; hence the practice amongst us of setting a seal to bills, bonds, leases, purchases, letters patents, and this seal hath usually persons cognizance or Coat of Armes, or some impression upon it, and leaves the impression upon the wax; the God of Heaven adds his seal, there is the broad seal of the new Covenant, *Baptism* and the *Lords Supper*, given and appointed purposely for the confirmation of our faith, and assuring of our hearts of the truth of the promises: as Circumcision is called a seal of the Righteousness of faith, *Rom*. 4. 11. for by these seals both the Grace of God is confirmed

to us, and holy impressions wrought in the hearts of the elect : there are also privy seals the seal of this blessed spirit in our hearts
 Eph. 4. 30. Ephes. 1. 13. — *sealed with that holy spirit of promise* ; hereby Gods Children are distinguished from wicked men, and confirmed in the truth of the Gospel ; yea it beareth witness with their spirit that they are the Children of God Rom. 8. 16. this is an elegant similitude, for all civil Charters and Testaments become authentick by the addition of a seal and the seal in former times was the note of Letters by which the Author was known, and a seal is the mark whereby genuine things are discerned from counterfeit ; all these are the uses of the spirits sealing, to confirm our hearts in the truth of God in his promise against all the temptations of Satan ; the blessed sealing is more prevalent for our confirmation than all philosophical reasons or demonstrations.

5. Another way to beget assurance among men is a solemn Oath, *and we know an Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife* Heb. 6. 16. and thus God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his Council confirmed it by an Oath, or interposed himself by an Oath it is very observable to consider the form of the Oath, God swears by himself, who

*Ἐπεὶ οὖν
 ἰσχυρὰ
 ἡ ἐπαγγελία
 τῆς χάριτος
 ἐστὶν ἡμῶν
 καὶ τοῦ
 Θεοῦ
 ἰσχυρὰ
 ἡ ἐπαγγελία
 τῆς χάριτος
 ἐστὶν ἡμῶν
 καὶ τοῦ
 Θεοῦ*

item jurans, etiam vivo dicens, capit credi sibi : O beatos nos quoniam causa deus jirat ! O miserimos si nec juranti domino credimus. Tertullianus de poen.

the living and true God, he could swear by no greater, and it is observed, that two things make a thing more credible; 1. the quality of the person speaking. 2. The manner of the speech. Now the form of the Oath in Gen. 22. 16. is exceeding emphatical to Abraham; partly because of the asseveration *surely*, partly because of the duplication in *blest* *I will blest thee*, if I speak it, it shall be done; moreover the form of the expression in Genesis is strange, for it is thus, *if I blest thee, thou shalt be blest*, or because I blest thee, or if I do not blest thee (which is the form of an Oath, Heb. 4. 3.) as if he should say, then let me not be true, just, yea let me not be God; God pawns his faithfulness upon it, and may he not then be believed? but for what end is this? it is to confirm his promises, and assure the hearts of all the heirs of promise that he intends to do, and will accomplish what he hath spoken, that they might have strong consolation, and that he might take away all doubts and hæitation; and all this he doth for the heirs of promise, he would not have done thus for others, but he doth this and much more to satisfy his doubting Children.

6. Yet further, men use to give a pawn, a pledge to assure others of their real purpose

Gen. 22. 16, 17. כי בֵּרַךְ
כִּי: אֲבִרְכֶּךָ. Est particula
causalis & conditionalis.

*Quid tibi prodest si Deus
se juramento constringit, si tu
hec quasi communem audis
fabulam transeas? — Furare
dicitur deus, ut tu audiens
paveas & intremisces & me-
tu constrictus inquiras quid
illud tantum est, pro quo deus
jurare dicitur: Orig. Homil.
9. super Gen. 22.*

to make good the bargain, and this is part
of the payment; this also doth our gracious
2 Cor. 1. God, *Ephes. 1. 14.* his spirit is the earnest
22. our inheritance, untill the redemption of the
Cap. 5. 5. purchased possession: an earnest is used
in purchasing Land, in hiring of Servants, and
in contracting Marriage, and when ever the
Lord puts his Holy Spirit into the heart,
its as a pledge of all the mercies of the Co-
venant and of our eternal inheritance: and
though some men may be unfaithful, so far
rather to lose their earnest, than make good
their bargain, yet we may be assured God
will not do so, for it is as impossible that
any saving grace of the Spirit should be call-
into hell, as it is for any sin to enter into
Heaven: God will not lose his pledge, but
fetch the soul to Heaven when he hath fetch-
the heart to himself; Grace is the Prologue
and Prælude to Glory, the first Resurrec-
tion leads the van to the second; a gracious
change prepares for a glorious change, Rom.
8. 11. *if the spirit of him that raised up Je-
sus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised
up Christ from the dead shall also quicken
your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth
in you:* the spirit confirms the promises,
and we need not fear any danger of re-
tractation, not but that the promises are firm
enough, but he would establish our hearts
in the faith thereof and acquiescence therein,
lest any question it.

7. Another way whereby men testifie their
cordial resolution to make good promises

is, by doing a great part of the work, which gives real evidence they will do the rest: he that promiseth to give another a thousand pounds, and hath already given him nine hundred, may he not rationally trust him for the rest? or suppose there were but one pound, or a penny behind, there is great reason to confide in him for what is wanting: why truly the Lord hath performed the greatest part of the promises of the Covenant; the great promise of the Covenant was, *that the seed of the Woman should break the Serpents head*; that the Son of God should be incarnate, be in mans stead in life and death to satisfy justice, fulfil the Law, and by his death bring in everlasting righteousness; and he hath already done it: now saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* God is before-hand with us; yea, if we be indeed heirs of promise, he hath made good another grand branch of the New Covenant in giving the conditions of the Covenant, faith, repentance, and new obedience; so that the main business is already done, the writings are made, sealed, signed and delivered, there wants nothing but actual possession; nay there is a Seisin and delivery of part of the inheritance, and dare we not trust

Should a King promise to erect some Colledge, and give liberal maintenance to Students in it, we are certain by an humane faith, that he will do such a thing though it be not begun; but if the foundations be in laying, we see its execution in part, and are assured it will be finished. *Ba'ns on E. b. c. 1. v. 17: p. 144.*

See Rom. 4. 8, 9, 10. *Qui misit unigenitum immisit spiritum, pro-misit vultum; quid tandem tibi negaturus est?* Bern.

God for the remainder? certainly we have good reason so to do: the contrary is unreasonable.

8. God hath gone another step, which is, to work many Miracles for the confirmation of these sure mercies, this is a degree further than man can reach to make any thing sure; hence saith our sweet Saviour; Joh. 5. 36. *I have greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the father hath sent me:* this Text shews the true and proper end and efficacy of Christs miracles; they are not dumb shews, but have a voice, and cry aloud for faith in the intelligent observer; yea and they were wont to beget faith in the spectators, as Nathaniel believed upon Christs telling him of his conference at a distance, Joh. 1. 48, 49. *the beginning of his miracles manifested his glory, and his Disciples believed in him,* Joh. 2. 11. and others comparing the doctrine of John with Christs Miracles believed on him, Joh. 10. 41. and indeed the Argument of Miracles is a cogent convincing Argument, for no man can do these real Miracles except God be with him, Joh. 3. 2. Certainly, the strange things wrought by Christ ought to assure our hearts of the truth of the Gospel, and consequently of the sureness of these Covenant-mercies. But upon this subject you have evident and abundant demonstrations from the pen of Reverend Mr. Baxter, in his *Saints Rest*, Part 2. in the Preface,

*igitur non
sunt muta
sed vocalis-
sima, ideo;
non simplici-
ter intuen-
da, sed &
intelligenti-
us audienda.
Marl in
loc.*

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Preface, and in *pag.* 215. to 234. to which I refer you: the truth is, God hath graciously condescended to confirm the Gospel by many infallible miracles which none can question, and all this to make sure to the elect these Covenant-mercies, therefore they are inexcusable that slight this way of the Gospels confirmation; See *Heb.* 2. 3, 4.

9. Another step that God hath gone is the various ways that God hath taken to make us know these sure mercies, and thereby to assure us thereof; As, 1. An audible intelligible voice from Heaven, at Christs Baptism, and in his Transfiguration, *this is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased*, and this voice the Apostle Peter saith he heard in the Holy Mount, 2 *Pet.* 1. 17, 18. so that these Gospel mercies are not devised Fables, but divine Oracles of undoubted truth. 2. The constant preachings of honest and unbiassed men, that were eye-witnesses of his glory; they give clear evidence of their hatred of evil, love of truth and goodness: and they could not be perverted by any selfish ends of profit, pleasure, or honour; for these were not proposed, promised or attained: Nay affliction and persecution was their known portion, and therefore certainly could not, would not couzen the world with lyes to get that which was not attainable in that way. 3. God hath adorned men with admirable gifts to enable them to demonstrate the certainty and excellency of these Covenant-mercies; extraordinary gifts in the Apostles dayes, as extem-

Mat. 3. 17.
Cap. 17. 5.

porary

1 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10. porary prophecying, singing, healing diseases, working miracles, discerning spirits, divers kinds of tongues : so that all Nations might

Act. 2. 6.

Eph. 4. 8.

hear these [*magnalia dei*] in their own dialect ; and now they are translated into all languages : and God hath continued to distribute ministerial gifts for the Churches satisfaction and edification. 4. Yea, he sent his

own Son to be the Preacher as well as Purchaser of these sure mercies ; *he spake at sundry times, and in divers manners in times past by the Prophets, but in these last dayes he hath spoken to us by his Son*, Heb. 1. 12. the more to conciliate in us reverence and credence ; for

he saith, *surely they will reverence my Son* : certainly he will declare to us the whole counsel of God, *for he was in the bosome of the Father, and came from thence for that very end to declare Gods mind*, Joh. 1. 18. 5. Yea

he hath raised Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a Preacher sent from the grave to assure us of the truth of these high mysteries and sweet mercies ; so the rich man could say in hell, if one went to them from the dead, they will repent, and believe, Rom. 16. 30. now our dear Saviour himself was dead and is alive, and as he is declared to

Rom. 1. 4.

be the Son of God by his Resurrection from the dead, so after his Resurrection he declared the great things of God, confirming his Disciples in the truth of things formerly delivered, and giving further testimonies and instructions, Luk. 24. 44 — 49. 6. Still

another way of manifestation is clear and
christal

christal Ordinances, in which as in a fair glass we may behold both the face of God, and the choicest mercies of the Covenant ; here you may not only hear the voice of God, but see Jesus Christ evidently set forth, crucified before your eyes, *Gal. 3. 1.* in the Sacrament of his blessed body and blood are obvious Gods Grace in giving Christ, Christs love in giving himself, his body broken for our food, his blood shed for the remission of our sins, and all the benefits of this new Covenant. 7. Another way more yet of the Lords manifesting these mercies, and so making them sure is the sanctifying and satisfying illumination of souls by his holy spirit, by this holy unction they know all things, *1 Joh. 2. 20.* *God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit,* in *1 Cor. 2. 10, 12.* now the spirit comes with conviction and demonstration, answers all the souls doubts and cavils, and leaves it without dispute and hæsitancy : so that the believing soul cannot but say, they are sure mercies ; he dare not deny this for a world.

10. Yet there is one other way whereby God doth make sure these mercies of the Covenant, and that is, marriage-knot, a mutual and matrimonial ingagement in the perpetual and inviolable bond of the Covenant, whereby Christ and the soul are inseparably linked together, and this relates to the particular application of these Covenant-mercies, and compleats all the former ; for saith the poor soul, I do not question but these mercies are

are sure in themselves, in their own nature, and sure to some, but are they so to me? what ways may I be assured of my title thereunto and interest therein? now this the Lord doth make good by entring into that sweet and familiar relation with his people of marriage, *thy maker is thy husband, and I am married to you*, saith the Lord, a believing soul is dead to the Law, that he may be married to Christ, and our heavenly husband *bateh putting away*, once married to Christ and for ever married to him, death it self breaks not this marriage-knot, nay it fastens and heightens it; here Christ and the soul are but as it were contracted, there the marriage is solemnized with the acclamations of glorious Angels, and glorified Saints, for, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ*: now souls are fitting for that great solemnity, *when the marriage of the Lamb shall come that the bride is made ready*; she is making her self ready in this world, she is married at the illustrious day of Christs second appearing: so then this marriage-knot cannot be broken since it is compleated in glory. But yet more particularly, consider that remarkable Text in *Hosea 2. 19, 20.* wherein the mercies of the Covenant are made over in a way of matrimonial relation; *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, &c.* in which Scripture there are four things that may assure the heart of the firmness of these Covenant-mercies, 1. The Author and Husband I, the great *Jehovah*, the

the infinite God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, who speaks and it is done, who works, and who can let it? it is he that saith, *I will betroth thee*, and who can forbid the banns of Matrimony? who is able to hinder this conjunction? 2. Here is the doubling of the phrase for greater certainty and security, *I will betroth thee, yea I will betroth thee*; fear not it shall be done: nay the third time it's repeated, v. 20. *I will even betroth thee*, what can any say more to assure a suspicious bride of a firm contract and marriage, *q. d.* I will have thee, thou shalt have me, do not distrust me, we will be married; all this God saith to meet with the incredulity of a guilty soul, that through fear desponds, and dare scarce look upon it as possible, or credible: Yet, 3. Here is the term and date of the Marriage, it was not for a week, moneth, year, seven years, no nor an hundred years only; nay it is not only during life, as other Marriages are made, but it is for ever, unto all eternity, it never fails, it lasts as long as the soul lasts; that's a long day, other marriages are temporary, terminable, faileable, and death looseth a Woman from the Law of her Husband; but this is marriage confirmed, and compleated at death, and endures for evermore. And then 4. The terms, conditions, and the manner of Marriage speak the sureness of this Covenant, and the mercies thereof, observe it; Loving-kindness is the motive to it, and mercies are the souls joynture, righteousness, judgement, faithfulness are the

Rom. 7. 2.

Writings

Writings (as it were) and evidences, to assure these fore-mentioned conditions : many persons marry such as they ought not to marry, as such as are too near of kin, and contrary to consent of friends, &c. and so are divorced, *but my marrying thee shall be in righteousness* ; many marry in a sudden passion of affection, and repent when they have done, *but I will marry thee in judgement* ; many marry fraudulently cheating the persons whom they marry, lead them into a snare and then leave them ; *but I will marry thee in faithfulness, integrity and fidelity*, we will never part, and though thou be unworthy now and maist transgress, yet ile fetch thee home, pardon thee, and maintain this marriage-knot with invariable constancy and fidelity ; What can more be said to assure the believing soul of the sureness of Covenant-mercies ? Besides consider, loving-kindness is the beginning, middle, and end of the match, he fetcheth arguments out of his own bosome to enter into this parlee, and after he hath contracted this friendship, and intimate relation, the same loving-kindness will perswade him to maintain it ; nay now his truth and faithfulness is ingaged, and he will be faithful in performing all his promises : Consider that notable Text, Mic. 7. 20. *thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the dayes of old* : mark, it is mercy to Abraham because made with him, but its truth to Jacob, and now is a kind of debt and

and must be paid, and made good. God is a free agent, yet he binds himself by promise, and so becomes a debtor to his Creature, or rather to himself on the behalf of his Creature: thus doth God assure to his Saints and spouse the dowry and joyniture of mercies that he promisethto them at this contracting of a marriage betwixt himself and souls: See Zech. 8. 8.

Reddis debita nulli debens.

Thus I have dispatcht the wayes that God takes to make these mercies of the Covenant sure to all the heirs of promise.

CHAP. V.

THE last head in the doctrinal part by way of illustration is, to shew how these Covenant-mercies are made sure, in or by or through Jesus Christ.

Now for clearing of this, observe these four things with reference to Jesus Christ, whereby these mercies are made sure.

1. His Hypostatical union.
2. His spiritual unction.
3. The Covenant of Redemption.
4. The execution of Christs office in the work of mans Redemption.

1. Consider the mysterious and stupendious union of the two natures in Jesus Christ, whereby he is both God and Man united together in one person; by the former he hath ability, by the latter a capacity to make the Covenant sure to the elect; so that now it is impossible the work should miscarry, as
God

*In aliis san-
ctis habitat
Deus ut in
templo, &
Organo, effe-
ctivè, ope-
rativè, in
Christo sub-
stantialiter.
Aret. in loc.*

God he is omnipotent and cannot fail or fall short of his end, as *man* he is suitable to his work, and fitted with a body both for active and passive obedience ; so that there is nothing required of mans nature, but Christ (being in our stead) did effectually manage it, for the Apostle saith, Col. 2. 9. *that in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily*, [σωματικῶς i. e. φυσικῶς, ὕστικῶς] i. e. naturally, personally, in such a way as he is in no other Creature, *in him we live, move, and have our being* as Creatures, but God is said to dwell in the Saints in a higher manner, as his Children ; but the God-head is not said to dwell in any man except Jesus Christ, God and man : God dwells in the Saints by his spirit as in a Temple or Organ *effectively, operatively*, in Christ *essentially, substantially* : *the word was made flesh*, and sometimes there were sparklings forth of his glory and majesty, so that the Disciples *beheld his glory as that of the only begotten of the Father*, Joh. 1. 14. well then, since this is an undeniable myserie, that God was manifested in the flesh, and hath undertaken to manage the work of our Redemption in both natures, certainly he will make sure work in what concerns him, for so saith the Prophet, Isa. 42. 4. *he shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgement in the earth*— he hath the powerful Hand of an infinite God, therefore he is mighty *to save*, and he hath the innocent Nature of a finite man, therefore he is fit *to suffer* : that's the first.

2. Consider

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2. Consider the compleat and abundant unction of Jesus Christ, whereby he hath both sufficiency and efficiency to go thorow his work, and authority for it also, the Scripture tells us that *Jesus Christ was annointed with oyle, and that above his fellows*, Heb. 1. 9. Christ was not only qualified with gifts and ornaments fit for office, but also to furnish the souls of all the elect, and that both for sanctification and edification, Jesus Christ hath the spirit but not as others have it, for the Saints have but a scantling and small measure thereof, but God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him, Joh. 3. 34. *to every one of us is given* Eph. 4. 7. *grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ*, but Christ hath it above all measure; for he hath the whole spirit substantially, he is and hath the treasury of Grace, a store-house of riches to supply indigent Creatures, in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2. 3. *therefore of his fulness do we receive grace for grace*, Joh. 1. 16. *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. 1. 19. and this is laid up on purpose for the supply of his members, that from the head may be conveyed influences through the whole body, Ephes. 4. 13, 14, 15, 16. besides he is annointed with authority for these supplies, Ephes. 1. 22, 23. *he hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*: hence he tells his Disciples, *that all power is given to him in Heaven and Earth*, Mat. 28. 18.

E

adde

adde to all this his fidelity, that as *Moses* was faithful as a *steward*, much more is *Christ* as a *Son* faithful to him that appointed him, *Heb.* 3. 2 — 6. Well now, lay all these together, and surely we need not question the certainty of Covenant-mercies. Since *Christ* hath sufficiency, authority, and fidelity, and is thus abundantly qualified for carrying on this Gospel-design, he both can and will make good the mercies of the Covenant to the heirs of the promise; especially considering,

3. The Covenant of Redemption, which is an admirable insuring act of free-grace, ingaging all the persons of the Sacred Trinity to carry on this work, especially God the Son of whom we are now speaking, this Covenant of Redemption is that mutual compact betwixt God the Father and the Son concerning the saving of lost man, wherein each did undertake to act his part in this great affair, as thus, God *the father* doth elect a certain number whom *Christ* was to Redeem, he was to part with his beloved Son out of his bosome whiles he came to the earth to do this great work, he was to uphold him, encourage him, put his spirit into him, call him in righteousness, hold his hand, keep him, and give him for a Covenant of the people, give him to see his seed; and though they be but few in comparison of the World, yet he will make him glorious, and in time he will satisfy him in giving him *the Heathen for his inheritance* and *the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*;
- Iſa.* 42. 1,
4, 6.
- Iſa.* 53. 10,

session: this is the ingagement on the Fathers part, and then the Lord Jesus, *the Son* of God promised the Father that he would assume the humane nature, and so become man, putting himself into the sinners stead, becoming his surety, fulfill all righteousness, by obeying the Moral Law, suffering for our breach of it, be betrayed, imprisoned, accused, condemned, crucified, buried, that he should rise from the dead, ascend into Heaven, sit at Gods right hand, intercede for Saints, &c. this part that Christ acted is fully laid down in *Isa. 53.* throughout: this was the great transaction betwixt the Father and the Son from all Eternity: that there was such a mutual agreement; See Titus 1. 2. *in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lye promised before the world began,* to whom did God promise any thing before man was Created? certainly he promised something to Jesus Christ concerning mans Redemption as before-mentioned; such a gracious plot was laid, and compact made betwixt the Father and the Son, and he cannot lye nor deny himself: So 2 Tim. 1. 9. *who hath saved us according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,* i. e. as Christ was a common person, as head, instead of the elect, so we were given to him by this Covenant, and that from all eternity, but how come we to know this, that are but of Yesterday; and so dim-sighted that we cannot see afar off? Why ver. 10. it is now made manifest by the appearing of our

That this is no singular Doctrine, but opened before, See Mr. Bulkly Gospel-Covenant.

part. 1. ch. 4. p. 31. to p. 46. where 'tis fully opened. — Also Mr. David Dickson in his Therapeutica sac. Book 1. chap. 4. p. 23. to pag. 71.

Saviour Jesus Christ, *who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel* : for Christ revealeth all the secrets that were lockt up in the bosome of the Father. Well then, if this was the mutual stipulation betwixt the Father and the Son, there is no question but they will be faithful to each other ; in the Old Testament God the Father trusted God the Son upon his promise to lay down his life, and so brought thousands of souls to Heaven before ever Christ was incarnate or suffered ; and now when Christ hath gone through the greatest part of his task, he trusteth God the Father to make good his part, that *he may fully see his seed, prolong his dayes, and that the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hand* ; and certainly there cannot be any failing on either part. Now this Covenant of Redemption is the Plat-form and foundation of the Covenant of Grace betwixt God and the Elect, there is the same number, and the like terms proportionably in both ; hence it is that although a believer find an unfaithful, treacherous, and unbelieving heart in himself daily departing from the living God, yet this Covenant is built upon an higher and firmer Covenant betwixt God the Father and God the Son, which cannot be broken and disannulled ; the Father and Son cannot deceive or be unfaithful to each other ; hence then it cometh to pass that the Covenant and the mercies thereof are so sure : I shall conclude this head with that notable passage of Christs to his Father

ath, Father upon this very account, Joh. 17. 4. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, i. e. I have hitherto made good and performed the conditions of the agreement on my part, ver. 5. and now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, i. e. make good thy part, in my exaltation: this with reference to Christs persen, then for his seed and members, he tells the Father that he had performed his part to them, in manifesting his name to them, praying for them, preserving of them, and now when he was to leave them, he desires the Father to do his part of the work in keeping those whom he had given him, ver. 11. in sanctifying and saving them, 17. 24. and can we imagine but that God, will be faithful to his Son on the behalf of his Saints, certainly he will; for as they were Redeemed by the Son, so they were Elected by the Father, and as God the Father gave them to Jesus Christ by election, ver. 6. and Jesus Christ dyed for them, and so Redeemed them, so God the Son resigns them up again to the Father, who will certainly keep them by his power through faith unto salvation.

4. Another thing considerable concerning the insuring of Covenant mercies by and through Jesus Christ is, that these are most fully assured to us by the execution of Christs Mediatory Offices, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation: Let us here consider, 1. Christs Offices. 2. His States.

1. Christs Offices are of three sorts, as 1. Sacerdotal. 2. Prophetical. 3. Regal.

1. As *Priest*, Christ insures to us many Covenant mercies, for he hath put himself in our stead, offered himself as a propitiatory Sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, which is a *sweet smelling savour*, and of infinite value: hence it is that Christ is called *a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*, Heb. 2. 17. certainly remission of sins is one of the grand mercies of the New Covenant, and this Christ assureth as Priest.

1 Pet. 1.
10, 11.

2. As *Prophet* he reveals to us the will of his Father, opens to us the sealed Book, anoints our eyes by his blessed spirit, the spirit of Christ inspired the Prophets of the Old Testament, and the Apostles of the new in writing Scripture, and Ministers in Preaching the Gospel, and believers in discerning the meaning of the Word, and beauty of Christ: it is Christ as Prophet that writes his Law in Believers hearts which is one of the great mercies of the new Covenant: that enlightens dark minds, and unlocks to us Divine Mysteries, and bringeth us from darkness to light.

3. As *King*. Christ Jesus doth what he pleaseth for the good of his Church, converting and subduing souls to himself, granting to them the spirit of power, love and of a sound mind, softening their hard and stony hearts mastering their high and sturdy Wills, awing, ordering, and centring their unruly, roving and raging affections, subduing their strong corruptions, regulating their conver-

sations,

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sations, begetting and increasing their Graces, supporting them under and sanctifying their afflictions, — all which Jesus Christ as King works for his Covenanted ones.

Yet more particularly in the second place, let us consider how our Covenant-mercies are assured to us by Jesus Christ with reference to his *two estates* of humiliation and exaltation.

1. In his estate of *exinanition*, and *humiliation*, here I might run through the instances of his contemptible birth, his despicable life (*i.e.* to a carnal eye) his being in the form of a servant, having no form nor comeliness, his hunger, thirst, wandrings, revilings of men, wrath of God, rage of Devils, all these confirm the Covenant, if we believe the history of the Gospel; but there's one thing more that put all out of doubt, and that is his real, ready and voluntary death, for as he had a power, so he had a will to lay down his life, and he dyed for the confirmation of this Covenant, and all the mercies thereof, a pregnant proof of this you have in *Heb. 9. 15.* the summ of which Text is, that Jesus Christ the great Mediatour of this new Covenant hath suffered death for the sins of the elect that were committed against the first Covenant, whereby all true believers might have the benefits of the new Covenant more surely and immutably made over to them, and this he further confirms by the paralel case of a Testament and the Testatour even amongst men, ver. 16, 17. *where a Testament*

Thus the
Apostle
argues,
Gal. 3. 15.
Brethren I
spake after
the manner
of men :
though it be
but a mans
Covenant ;
yet if it be
confirmed,
no man dis-
annulleth or
addeth
thereto.

is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator — no man can challenge a Legacy till he prove the death of him that left it, for while he is alive he may alter his Will at his pleasure, or as reason requireth, but when the Testator is dead, the heirs may look after their Legacies : Jesus Christ is the Testator, Saints are the heirs, the Legacies are these mercies of the Covenant ; now the Testator is dead, the Legacies come clear, and the heirs of promise may claim their interest therein, there's no alteration of the Will when the Testator is dead, there's no reversing, true Christians now come to enjoy their estates ; Christ emptied himself that we might be filled, he lost his life that we might live, *he became poor that we through his poverty might be rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9.

2. Christ's exaltation doth much more assure to us Covenant-mercies which consists in, 1. His Resurrection. 2. His Ascension ; and both these do abundantly confirm this to us.

1. Christ's rising again from the Grave assures us of the certainty of these mercies ; for though he was dead, yet he is alive, and so lives to be his own Executor, if Christ had been detained Prisoner by the King of Terrours, we might groundedly suspect that justice were not satisfied, nor mercies fully purchased ; but *he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*, Rom. 4. 25. and now he hath conquered death, and through death he hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and

and so hath delivered the heirs of promise from the fear of death, Heb. 2. 14, 15. nay and by his resurrection he raiseth us to a new life of holiness here, and a blessed life of happiness hereafter, Rom. 6. 4. with cap. 8. 11. ^{2 Cor. 4.} Christs Resurrection abundantly clears the ^{14.} Saints from all accusations and condemnation, Rom. 8. 33, 34. in this therefore we may rejoyce and triumph as the founttain of our consolation; See Act. 2. 24, 25, 26.

2. Christs Ascension into Heaven insures and secures Covenant-mercies to us, both as it sets him in the holy of holies, far above the reach of men and Devils, and as he went before to prepare a place for us, he bids Mary Joh. 14. 2. to tell the Disciples, Joh. 20. 17. go to my Brethren and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, q. d. now you may be assured of your interest in God in a Covenant-way, for now I have done that work on earth that obstructed your fellowship and obscured your interests; so that now you may call him your God, and come unto him as your Father, without misgivings within or challenges from without. There are two things in Christs Ascension that assure these mercies to us. 1. His session at Gods right hand. 2. His Intercession.

1. Jesus Christ is set at Gods right hand in heavenly places, Ephes. 1. 20. and the two following verses afford us two choice considerations that tend further to assure us, 1. That he is far above all principality and power, might, dominion, and every name in this world

*world and that to come, ver. 21. i. e. Christ as man is advanced not only above all States and Potentates on earth, but above all Angels and Arch-angels in Heaven, therefore far above the Devils, none can hinder, all are his servants to help forward his design for the good of souls: oh what a sweet consideration is this, that our nature is advanced thus high? yea in the person of the Redeemer there is both sympathie, ability, and authority, and therefore he will effectually manage his glorious undertaking: yet that's not all, for 2. In the 22 ver. 'tis said, that he gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, i. e. not only to be the head of the Church, but to be Head and Governour over all things for the good of the Church; so that now the whole world is subordinate to him for the advantage of elect souls, and now every thing shall help them forward towards Heaven: yet further there is something more in the phrase and that is, that as the head is gone before to Heaven, so the members shall undoubtedly follow after, and so salvation shall be sure, and this is very clear in that admirable Text, Ephes. 2. 6. *and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: i. e. thus,* it's as sure as if were there already, or we are set there in our representative, Jesus Christ, or these holy places and priviledges on earth are an earnest of glory, but indeed the saints are already saved, so saith Paul;*

Rom. 8. 24. ver. 5. *by grace ye are saved, and elsewhere,*

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we are saved by hope, so that we have (as it were) taken up our rooms (as one saith) in Heaven afore-hand, whereunto we have just right upon earth by vertue of union which is the ground of communion, for he that hath the Son hath life, i. e. he hath possession of it as by Turf or Twig, he hath, in a sort, Seisin and delivery : our head is in Heaven, and although these things yet appear not in the members, yet because of the hidden union betwixt the head and members, that which is peculiar to the one is appropriated to the other ; hence saith the Apostle again, Col. 3. 3, 4. Your life is hid with Christ in God, — when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory, — when the dull shell of our mortal bodies shall be broken, then shall the pearl of Grace shine forth in its lustre and glory : Yea he will also change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Phil. 3. 21.*

Quia nondum hæc qua commoratur, in membris apparent — propter arcanam tamén unitatem ad membra certè pertinent: — Calvin. in loc.

I Tim. 2. 5.

2. Yet further, Christs intercession now he is in Heaven assures us of the certainty of Covenant-mercies, for he is Mediator, a middle person, and so fit to negotiate the business with God for poor man, and he intercedes effectually for guilty souls, by vertue of the worthiness of his own person and merits, and as an advocate in a legal and judicial way he solicits for them and pleads their cause, and he appears in Heaven for them vindicating them from all accusations, and will not all this satisfie? further, Christs intercession is of large extent,

See this
D^ectrine
of Christs
intercession
pithily and
profitably
opened in
Mr. Dur-
hams Ex-
pos. of Re-
vel. 8. 1.
Left. 1. pag.
407. to
414.

extent, and of as powerful efficacy, for he can refuse no cause put on him, but must and will intercede, being imployed; so he cannot but be heard alwayes; and his promise is as full, *whatsoever ye ask in my name, it shall be done unto you*, Joh. 14. 13, 14. nay, *I will do it*: the Intercessour is the Executour. But I shall not be large in this sweet point of Christs Intercession, because many have writ much about it, only take notice of that well-known Text in Heb. 7. 25. (for a close of this head) *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them*: this Text is a notable demonstration of the excellency of Christs Priestly Office, tending to the confirmation of this point and consolation of believers, wherein are these seven things. 1. The end of it, and that is *to save souls*, and the Infinite God will certainly accomplish his end, men may fall short, but God cannot miscarry, *I work*, saith he, *and who shall let it*. 2. The universality of it, *he saves all*, i. e. all believers, rich and poor, whether they have more or less worthiness, for they are not saved for their own but for Christs merits. 3. The efficacy thereof, *he saves to the uttermost*, (*ὡς τὸ παντελὲς*) i. e. to the uttermost point or term of life, even to death and beyond it, or so as none can mend his work, for as he is the author, so he is the finisher of our faith and hope, consolation and salvation, none can come after him to finish what he hath begun: and

and he saves to the uttermost from all kinds of enemies, none can challenge an interest in souls after he hath done his work, and he saves to the uttermost, *i. e.* he leaves them not till he have brought them into the highest happiness that Creatures are capable to enjoy: there is all manner of perfection in this salvation. 4. Here is the Subjects or persons saved, *those that come to God*, or the condition, coming to God by Christ; now this is such a disposition as he himself doth work, for the power of his Spirit doth effectually draw souls to God, *Joh. 6. 44, 45.* the condition is believing and he works the condition: Christ is that sure Ladder of *Jacob* by which souls may ascend to God, and into Heaven, never any fell off this Ladder, or miscarried that came to God by Christ. 5. Christs ability to carry on that work, in the first words, *he is able*, this we cleared in the first head concerning the union of the two natures; *he is omnipotent*, therefore he is said to be mighty to save, and if he can do any thing in this soul-saving work, he will not fail those that lay the whole stress of their souls upon him. 6. Here's his capacity to save, for the Text saith, *he ever lives*, a living Saviour can revive dying, dead souls: if Christ were not alive, there would be no hope of life by him, in vain should we seek for living enjoyments among the dead: but our Saviour is revived and lives for ever: *he is the living Bread that came down from Heaven, Joh. 6. 5. and is again risen and ascended up into Heaven, and because he lives, we live also.*

7. There's

7. There's his compleat execution of his present office : *he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, saith the Text, therefore must needs compleat the work he hath begun on earth, as the High-priest under the Law, our Medi-
 Levit. 16. atour sprinkles the vertue of his meritorious
 Heb. 9. 11. Offering here on earth upon the mercy-seat
 12. now in Heaven, and continually bears the names of his Saints upon his brest, and appears in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24. so that we have a friend in our nature to own us in open Court, yea God the Father bade him welcome into Heaven, and as a token thereof, sets him upon his right hand : which is an evidence of honour, as *Solomon* dealt with his Mother, and then bids him ask, and he would give him all that was in his heart ; certainly then the mercies of the Covenant must needs be sure, and that in Christ the Mediatour, since his Intercession is so prevailing that he said in the dayes of his flesh, when praying over *Lazarus's* Grave, *Father, I knew that thou hearest me alwayes*, Joh. 11. 42.

Thus I have dispatcht the Doctrinal part of this subject wherein I have endeavoured to clear up what the mercies of the Covenant are, in what respects they are said to be sure, by what means and wayes they are made sure, and how they are made sure in and by Jesus Christ, the great Mediator of the Covenant.

CHAP. VI.

NOW for the Application of this point,
I shall make use of it several wayes

1. For confutation of, 1. *Atheists*. 2. *Papists*.
3. *Arminians*. 4. *Socinians*.

1. It confutes the vain conceits of *Atheists* who call in question the great things of Religion, they are first *Scepticks* and Disputants, then by degrees they grow *Atheists* and deny God; as one saith, in the Academy of Atheism, a sinning soul takes these sad degrees;
1. To doubting whether there be a God or no. 2. To living as though there were indeed no God. 3. To wishing that there were none; and 4. To disputing against a Deity, and then he commenceth Doctor in positive Conclusions, with the fool that *there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1. many are ready to say, that Religion in the power of it is but a fiery Meteor, which the influence of those hot Dog-stars of the times (Ministers) have drawn up and kindled in the grosser Region of some sick and melancholy brains, and so like fire is apt to catch in thatcht and low-built houses, not Pallaces, and Castles, *i. e.* large and high-built souls: But the truth is, some *Atheists* do find in this life the certainty of our Religion, all shall find it to their cost hereafter by an irrecoverable loss of these sure mercies, and by intolerable sustaining of everlasting miseries: As Atheism hath been much

Mr. Herle
in Policy,
p. 52.

much propagated in these latter dayes, so God hath afforded some remarkable convictions by several modern examples: *Cardinal Rich-lieu*, who after he had given Law to all *Europe* many years, confessed to *P. Du Moulin*, that being forced to many irregularities in his life time, by that which they call Reason of state, and not being able to satisfie his Conscience, thence had temptations to dis-believe a God, another World, the immortality of the soul, and by that distrust to relieve his aking heart; but could not; so strong, said he, was the notion of God on his soul, so clear the impression of him upon the frame of the world, so unanimous the consent of mankind—that he could not but taste the powers of the World to come, and so live as one that must dye, and so dye as one that must live for ever: and being asked one day why he was so sad, he answered, *Monsier, Monsier*, the soul is a serious thing, it must be either sad here for a moment, or sad for ever: and though *Cardinal Mazareen* was an Atheist the greatest part of his time, yet he hath left behind him clear convictions of the immortality of the soul, and certainty of another state after this life; professing that if he were to live again, he would be a *Capuchin* rather than a *Courtier*, i. e. of a Popish religious Order, to serve God in their way, rather than choose worldly preferments: 'tis recorded of Sir *John Mason* Councillor to *Hen. 8. Edw. 6.* that he called his Clark and Steward to him, and said I have seen five Princes, been Privy Councillour to

four,

four, seen the most remarkable observables
in foreign parts, been at most State-trans-
actions for thirty years, and have learned,
that *seriousness is the greatest wisdom, tempe-
rance the best physick, and a good conscience is
the fairest estate*, and were I to live again I
would change the Court-life for a Cloyster,
my privy Councillors bustles for an Hermits
retirement, and my whole life in the Pallace
for one hours enjoyment of God, in the
Chappel; all things else forsake me, besides
my God, my Duty, my Prayer: thus he:
It is also recorded of *Charles 5.* Emperour
of *Germany*, King of *Spain*, Lord of the
Netherlands, that after 23. pitcht Fields,
6. Triumphs, 8. Kingdoms won, — after
all this success reigned all these, retired to
his Devotion, had his Funeral celebrated be-
fore his face, left this testimony behind him,
that the sincere profession of Religion hath
its sweets and joys that Courts were stran-
gers to: and we know from Holy Writ that
Solomon, after his vast experiments and exact
disquisitions left this Maxime as the total
summ of his large accounts, Eccles. 12. 13 —
*fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is
the whole duty of man*: Atheists never yet tasted
the sweetness of Religion, they never fully
studied the Word or Works of God, both
which would satisfie them; 'tis recorded of
Francis Junius, that reading *Tully, de Legibus*,
he fell into a perswasion that God cared for
nothing, neither his own nor others affairs,
but in a tumult in *Lions*, the Lord convinced

*Nihil curare
deum, nec
sui nec ali-
eni.*

him of a Divine Providence by delivering him strangely from eminent death, and also being put by his Father upon reading the first Chapter of *John's* Gospel, he was abundantly convinced by the Divinity of the Argument, Majesty and Authority of the stile, in such a manner as his body trembled, his mind was astonished, and his his soul savingly Converted : Yea, the works of God are sufficient to leave a Conviction of a Deity upon Conscience. *Lord Bacon* used to say, that *a little smattering in Philosophy might tempt a man, to be an Atheist, but a thorough study of it would bring him back to be Religious, for it would reduce him to a first cause and a last end* : But I must not enlarge on these Atheists, see them described and confuted in *Weems* Treatise of four degenerate Sons of *Adam*. All I shall adde, is the words of *Lord Chancellour Egerton*, to be Profane is the simplest thing in the World, for the Atheist layes a wager against the serious man, that there is no God, but upon woful odds, he ventures his everlasting state, the other only hazards the loss of his Lusts ; if there were no God, yet the latter doth as well as the Atheist at last, and lives better at present, but if there be a God, (as undoubtedly there is) Oh the vast disproportion at the great day, if the Arguments for or against the verity of the Gospel were equal, yet the gain or hazard is infinitely unequal : therefore every wise man will take the safest side: Lord what an Age do we live in ? when the

the choicest truths, duties, mercies from a principle of opinionativeness or licentiousness are questioned or denied. Well, God hath his way and day to convince these wretched Atheists by real and unanswerable demonstrations: so that all men shall say, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth,* Plal. 58. 11.

2. It notably confutes the *Papists*, because all these good things of the Covenant are mercy, not merit, we are under a Covenant of Grace not of Works, *the mercies of God are our merits.* We have cause to renounce our own righteousness, alas what are our best works to obtain favour at the hands of God, those before Conversion, which they call meritorious [*de congruo*] are not truly good works wanting a Principle, and those after Conversion, which they call works of condignity, these are not exactly good, without the stain of imperfection; and therefore cannot merit: they hold two justifications according to these preparatories, the first is, when a sinner of an evil man, is made a good man, which is done by pardon of sin, and infusion of inward righteousness, *i. e.* the habit of Hope and Charity: the second is, when a man of a good man is made

Dei misericordia, merita nostra.

They acknowledge Christ's Righteousness to be the only meritorious cause

of this first justification: *i. e.* he procureth the infusion of this grace— all *Papists* assert roundly that man is justified, *per solam gratiam inhaerentem, tanquam per formam integram sine impu- tatione externae justitiae Christi.* Suarez l. 7. c. 7. p. 83.

Isa. 64. 6.

better, and this say they may proceed from works of Grace, because he which is righteous by the first justification can bring forth good works, by merit whereof he is able to make himself more just and righteous, but we assert that the very thing by which we are justified and accepted is only the mercy of God and the merits of Christs active and passive obedience; which are imputed to us and received by faith alone; and our obedience, or performances cannot be satisfaction to Gods justice, because they are imperfect and defective, *filthy rags*, a rag and cannot cover us, and filthy, therefore will rather defile than justify us: at the great day we must have something that can countervail the justice of God, but *Paul* durst not appear in his own Righteousness, but in Christs, *Phil.* 3. 9. and how dare we? Certainly *Paul's* Doctrine is an infallible truth of God, *Rom.* 3. 20. — *by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.* — And ver. 24. *being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:* and though *Papists* deride imputed righteousness. Yet 'tis mentioned ten times in *Rom.* 4. and frequently asserted and proved through *Paul's* Epistles. So 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. *as Christ was made sin for us, so are we made the Righteousness of God in him;* now Christ was made sin for us no otherwayes than by God's impuring our sins to him: for 'tis Blasphemy to say Christ was sin by infusion of sin into him, or inherency of sin in him.

Besides

Besides our justification comes to us as our condemnation, which was not only by propagation, but by the imputation of *Adam's* disobedience, *Rom. 5. 19.* all the mercies of the Covenant are to believers made over by a deed of gift, indeed *the wages of sin is death, but eternal life is only the gift of God*, with all that leads thercunto, *Rom. 6. 23.* But however *Papists* may dispute in the Schools, yet when they come to lye upon sick and deathbeds, they are glad to come off with *Bellarmines*, *tutissimum est*, it's safest to rely only on the mercy of God and merits of Christ for justification: let us still hold the safe way and leave them to their uncertain imperfect Righteousness. But 'tis easily discernable what is the reason of the *Papists* opposing free justification by grace only, because it would demolish their Purgatory, Masses for quick and dead, Invocation of Saints, Worshipping of Images, Indulgences, and their Treasures of Merits; hence a *modern Divine* hath laid down the grounds that render the Salvation of a *Papist* in a sort impossible, and clears it in this about Justification; and proves undeniably, that their contrivance of the way of Justification doth overturn most, if not all the truths of the Gospel, and is utterly inconsistent with Gods way of saving sinners; for it is the same for matter and

Dr. Pride-
aux Lect. 5.
De just.
fol. 64

See this
Doctrine
stated and
cleared in
Durham en
Rec. fol
585 &c.
Vid. fol.
590. to
594.
Ipsa gloria
Secundum

*totum suum esse, & ut ita dicam secundum substantialian tanquam
merces meritum promittitur: Suarez lib. 12. cap. 23. page
221, 223.*

form with the Covenant of works, which they say Christ hath merited, and strength anew to keep the same, as *Adam* in innocency, and now sinners are to stand and fall in the obtaining of life promised according to their own performing of the condition of works, in the use of that first grace, and by this they merit perseverance and Heaven; and lest in-dwelling corruptions and defects in duties marr this, they say concupiscence is not a sin against the Moral Law, and there are many sins Venial and not Mortal, which therefore do not hinder merit and acceptance: alas what a new and Anti-evangelical way is this, which confounds Justification and Sanctification, derogates from the Nature of Grace, enervateth the merit of Christ, altereth the nature of the Gospel-covenant, — &c. But I must not inlarge, let us study this important subject, and take heed of corrupting this Fountain, or building on any other foundation besides Christ's sole righteousness.

2. There's another uncomfortable Doctrine of the *Papists* which is a denial that a Christian can be assured of his interest in the Covenant, and his eternal salvation. We hold that a Christian may attain to assurance of faith without extraordinary Revelation, they say a man may indeed attain to a conjectural certainty which only ariseth from hope, in regard of God which promiseth; but in regard of our selves and our indisposition so, we are to be at uncertainties : certainly

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tainly a Child of God may not only be assured of Gods fidelity but his own sincerity; these Mercies are Sure in respect of the Subject as well as the Object, for the promises run in general and indefinite terms, *whosoever believeth shall be saved*: but I, saith the soul, truly believe, therefore I shall be saved, and this particular application and reflection is as much as if he said, if thou *John, Thomas, Peter* do believe, thou shalt be saved; now though the heart be deceitful, yet the Scripture hath laid down such Characters by which a man may try and discern the sincerity of his own act in closing with Christ; for true believing is a receiving of him as he is offered to us in the Gospel, *Job. 1. 12.* Besides the Saints receive the Spirit of Adoption, which beareth witness with their spirits, that they are the Children of God, *Rom. 8. 15, 16.* and this is an earnest of their inheritance which assures them of the whole possession; it's a seal, and takes away all occasion of doubting: *Paul* saith of all believers, *1 Cor. 2. 12.* *we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given us of God;* i. e. these mercies of the Covenant, Adoption, pardon, sanctification, salvation: God hath laid it upon us as a duty to *make* *2 Pet. 1. 10.* *our calling and election sure*, not in it self, but to our selves, therefore it is attainable, for God doth not command us impossibilities; he that bids us try our selves whether we be in *2 Cor. 13. 5.* the faith supposeth we may come to know

Eph. 1. 14.

4 30.

Mark. 11.]

I Joh. 5.

14, 15.

upon an exact tryal : Besides, many of the Saints have been assured of their sincerity, and salvation by ordinary ways, which all the Saints may use, and have a like success in a like full assurance of faith : and God hath bid us *ask that we may receive, that our joy may be full* : now we are to *ask in faith* that he will grant what we ask, and we have a promise to be heard, yea he therefore sets us on asking that he may give : But I need not stand long to prove the possibility of a Child of Gods attaining assurance, for experience doth abundantly confirm it, and blessed be God that in this we can groundedly say the *Papists* are Lyars.

3. Another sort whom this Text and Doctrine confutes is the *Arminians*, and this in two respect, 1. In the business of universal Redemption, 2. In the falling away from Grace.

1. The Text saith these are *the sure mercies of David*, God's *Davids* or beloved ones have only an interest in them, not all men; and in the Doctrine, I say, *that Covenant-mercies promised in Christ are purchased and insured by Christ to all the Heirs of promise*, and I must add *only* to these, and to none besides, and therefore Christ dyed not for all, and I shall only use these two Arguments, which immediately relate to the present subject:

1. *Christs mediatory undertakings are not intended as a price for any but such as were proposed by God to the Mediator in the Covenant of Redemption, to be Redeemed by him,*

but

but all and everyone were not so proposed, therefore not redeemed. I have before opened that great transaction betwixt the Father and the Son, now 'tis most certain that the Mediators death and sufferings are to be lookt upon as regulated and qualified in respect of their effects, according to what was proposed by the Father, and consented to by the Son; hence Christ saith that *he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work, and to give eternal life to as many as God had given to him*: therefore Christ must by his undertakings ensure these mercies to all those, and none but those that the Father proposed to him in this everlasting bargain; as for that conditional giving of some to Christ, which some speak of, that would derogate from his glory, for he must needs know the event, and that such a conditional giving would not effect it; and to say he would what should not come to pass, or to apply such means as he knew would not be effectual to the end, cannot be imagined: besides those that are given to Christ are contra-distinguished from others that are not given to him; therefore these only are assigned peculiarly to be redeemed and not others.

Arg. 2. *All those and only those whom Christ Redeemed, have all the mercies of the Covenant insured to them, but all have not all the mercies of the Covenant insured to them and conferred on them, therefore all are not Redeemed by Christ.* Christ is the surety and Mediator

Mediator of the New Covenant; and he gives Faith, Repentance, Pardon, Heaven to them for whom he is engaged as a Surety, they shall not fail of all the Covenant-mercies, that are absolutely necessary to Salvation, for he is faithful in the Execution of all his Offices; now we know all men have not saving Faith, nor Repentance; it cannot be conceived but that his satisfaction must be equally effectual for the procuring of these saving mercies to those whose room he sustained; and indeed God promiseth as a recompence to him, that *he shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied*; yea *he shall justify many*, i. e. as many as he undertook for, *Isa. 53. 11.* if Christ hath born their iniquities, they must be justified, else he missed of his end; there is an inseparable connexion betwixt Christ's undertaking for them, and his bestowing Covenant-mercies on them: all that are Redeemed by Christ's Blood are made *Kings and Priests to God*, *Rev. 5, 9, 10.* they are purchased to be a *peculiar people to God*, they are *washed from their sins in his blood, redeemed from their vain Conversation, delivered from spiritual enemies to serve God in holiness all their days, and to be received to Heaven when they dye*; these are the mercies of the Covenant which the Mediator purchaseth, and applyeth to all the elect, and to none but elect souls; therefore none else are Redeemed: for there is no saving nor eternal mercy procured to any reprobate by Christ's death, for the proper and native

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native fruits of Christs death are not divided, therefore he prays for them that were given to him, and for whose sake he did sanctifie himself, and excludes the reprobate World, for whom he purchased not these Covenant-mercies, therefore he dyed not for them : that's the former. Joh. 17.

2. This point confutes *Arminians* in their first opinion of the Saints Apostacy ; some hold a total, as *Lutherans*, others a final as *Arminius*, others maintain a total and final Apostacy of Saints ; we hold that believing, regenerate justified persons, that are endowed with the divine nature and a lively hope shall not lose that principle and fall from that state of grace, and be utterly deprived of the favour of God, and indeed we need no other Arguments but this, that these mercies of the Covenant are sure mercies, which they would not be if they might be lost ; there is the immutability of Gods Promise in the New Covenant, the intercession of Jesus Christ for the Elect, the Omnipotency of the Shepherd of Israel who will not lose one of his Sheep, the efficacy of the spirit, supporting and renewing the seed of God, and life of Grace in believers, and this seed of God keeps a believer from sinning in two respects : 1. He hates and nills in part the evil which he wills and works. 2. If by humane frailty he fall, he makes not a trade of sin, or keeps a course in it, but the seed of Grace makes him restless till he return to God, and be entertained into favour and fellowship with him : thus though good

1 Joh. 3.9.
Rom. 7.19.

good *David* sometimes goes astray like a lost sheep, yet then he cannot forget God or his commandments, *Psal.* 119. 176. his heart was dissatisfied till his God and his soul were at peace again; this gracious Principle inclines him God-wards and Heaven-wards, it is a well of water springing up into everlasting life, *Joh.* 4. 14. 'tis an increasing grain of mustard-seed, 'tis an incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth for ever, an abiding union, an ingrafted word, an indwelling Spirit, &c. therefore cannot be lost. Blessed be God for this comfortable point, which doth not beget licentiousness as our Adversaries bely it, but diligence in the ways of God, as the genuine product of it, as the experience of the Saints testifies. But I shall say the less of this, because I have hinted at it before in the Doctrinal part, and others have said so much of it.

4. And the last sort that are confuted by this point of the Sure Mercies of *David* is the *Socinian* error, that Christ's death is not a satisfaction for sin, the *Socinians* hold that Christ's sufferings were only for the confirmation of his Doctrine, or for the imitation of Saints, or at most, only to purchase to himself the prerogative to forgive sins freely; these ends are framed mainly as an engine to destroy Christ's God-head and personality in the glorious Trinity; and 'tis recorded of *Socinus* the patron of this blasphemy that he held the world was not made of nothing, lest he should be forced to acknowledge the infiniteness

Mat. 13.

1 Pet. 1.

1 Joh. 2.

Jam. 1. 21.

niteness of Gods power, which he denied,
 and of Christs divine nature, by whom he Heb. 1. 2.
 made the Worlds. But we on the contrary
 do confidently believe, that when the Majesty
 of God was wronged by the sin of man, and
 when it behoved man to make satisfaction to
 justice, or never be freed from the sentence of
 condemnation, or obtain reconciliation, & this
 being beyond the power of a finite creature :
 Christ God-man did interpose himself in our
 stead to be a sacrifice for the elect to satisfy
 justice, and bring in everlasting righteousness,
 which satisfaction is accepted of God the
 Father and imputed to the sincere believer :
 and this is the sum of the Gospel, and
 clearly held forth therein to all that are not
 wilfully blind, in *Isa. 53. 6.* 'tis said *the Lord*
laid on him the iniquities of us all, and saith
 the Apostle, *he became sin for us*, i. e. in our
 room or stead, hence is he called *a Surety* in
 paying our debt, and *a ransom*, and his death
 is called *a propitiation*, *an expiatory Sacrifice*,
be enduring the curse for us, and washing us
from our sins in his own blood, and purchased
his Church with his own blood, i. e. the blood
 of God-man. But the Scripture is full of
 testimonies, and the subject I have been so
 largely insisting upon in the doctrinal part
 abundantly clears it, that Jesus Christ as Me-
 diator of the new Covenant doth insure the
 mercies of it to all the Heirs of Promise by
 his meritorious undertakings, which I have
 abundantly cleared, and the *Socinians* deny-
 ing this, do also deny the merit and excel-
 lency

2 Cor. 5. 21.
 Heb. 7. 22.
 Job 33. 24.
 Gal. 3. 13,
 14.
 Rev. 15.
 Act. 20. 28.

lency of Christs obedience and death, and his divine nature, and so deserve not to be ranked among the number of Christians: the Lord preserve us from these black and destructive ways of Errour and Heresie, and drench our hearts in the through sense and experience of these Sure Mercies of *David*; for all Dagon will fall before this Ark of the Covenant, and the clear understanding of this Doctrine will rectifie many mistakes; the right conceiving, and solid embracing of these New Covenant-mercies, is the greatest help to a sound mind, and sincere heart which are great preservatives against error and apostacy.

But thus much for the first Use.

CHAP. VII.

THE second Use is of Instruction, which may inform us in sundry very necessary truths, and direct us in several duties from the consideration of these Sure Mercies of *David*, and the aforesaid way of making them Sure.

1. It instructs concerning the great difference betwixt the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. Divines use to give several differences betwixt them. But indeed this is the main, that *the former was consisting in an inherent righteousness, the other in imputed*; in the first man was to perform personal, perfect, and perpetual Righteousness, in this second our surety and great Mediator undertakes it for us, and it is applied to us by faith, which is now become the Evangelical condition, in the room of that legal condition of compleat obedience; so that was struck betwixt God and man immediately, this through an interposing Mediator, *Gal. 3. 19.* the former was soon broken, because though man was upright, yet he was mutable and that we feel to our cost; but Jesus Christ the great Mediator of this new Covenant is *the Lord Jehovah, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, able to save to the uttermost*; he is God and changeth not, therefore are *not we consumed, and therefore are souls saved*:
hence

hence saith the Apostle, Heb. 8. 6. He (i.e. Jesus Christ) hath obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant which was established upon a better promise: indeed the excellency of the Covenant doth chiefly arise from the excellency of the Mediator of it, and the manner

Heb. 7. 22.

9. 15.

12. 24.

1 Tim. 2. 5.

Verum hæc

Apostoli

comparatio

ad formam

potius quam

ad materiam

referenda

est. Calv.

in loc.

of its confirmation, which is Christ, God-man by his active and passive obedience, who is frequently called our Mediator. Although that place in the *Hebrews* doth rather respect the form of administering the Covenant than the matter, and 'tis a comparison betwixt the dispensation to the Fathers under the Law; and this in Gospel-times, for they had the same Covenant, of Grace, though under Shadows and Types, that we enjoy in the substance and performance, yet by consequence it holds forth the precedency of our Gospel-Covenant above, and beyond the Legal, which was made with *Adam*.

That I may a little further open this, there are two things illustriously shining in this Gospel-covenant. 1. The Grace and Love of God. 2. The Wisdom of God, 1. Consider the infinite Mercy, Favour and Compassion, the Tenderneſs, Love and Condeſcention of the great God in renewing the Covenant which man had broken; I confess there are many curious Questions asked concerning these two Covenants, as these: Could not God as well have secured the conditions of the first Covenant by assisting *Adam* with Grace to perform them, and persevere therein?

therein? and again, Why might not the first Covenant have been spared, and this second have served the turn for both? But what is man that he should find fault with Gods pleasure? Yet we might answer all these with the assertion and admiration of Gods infinite wisdom, and mercy. Gods glorious attributes are all seconds one to another, mercy imployes power, power backs truth, truth seconds justice, and they do all imploy wisdom, and wisdom doth order all to his glory; if there had not been a first Covenant, there had not been a tryal of man's obedience, if it had been kept Gods wisdom had not appeared, in repairing the breach, nor his love in sending his Son, nor his justice and power in triumphing over Satans malice, or making advantage thereby: besides if there had been no first Covenant violated, there could not have been such a glorious displaying of Free-grace in the reconciliation betwixt God and man, which implyes both a Covenant and a breach. Oh the mercy of God in Christ! 'tis wonderful, stupendious mercy that God was willing to hold any correspondence with man in a Covenant-way that had broken with him before. Yet free-grace would not trust sorry man with a stock any more in his own hands that had been a bankrupt: Yea God stayed not till man sought out for this surety, but prevented him with Free-grace: we read that when *Augustus* made a Proclamation, that whoever would bring him the head of *Carocotta* the

Spanish Pirate should have a rich reward; *Carocotta* hearing of it came and presented his head to the Emperour, and challeng'd the reward; but when man had fallen he runs away, endeavours to hide himself, low pursues and overtakes him, and contracts with guilty *Adam*, a better, and unthought of, unsought for Covenant. *Parmenio's* large Letter to *Alexander* against *Olimpia*, was all answered with one tear of a Mother: but where is any one tear to bewail or make amends for mans horrid crime? no not a word to procure this favour; Free-grace did all to bring Traitors into a League: God's heart was full; he could not hold but call he must, and seek and run to fetch home apostate man, that profligate Rebel, that durst not shew his face, or ask forgiveness: but the Lord of life and glory, the King of Heaven is ready to forgive, and to give the glorious things of Heaven to them that enquire not after them.

2. Here behold such a piece of wisdom, as never eye beheld, ear heard, or heart conceived; the Apostle calls it the manifold wisdom of God; I cannot here stand to open all the parts thereof that fall within the reach of a finite view; I shall only endeavour to unfold one branch thereof, by clearing this strange Paradox, viz. How it could be possible, since God himself is immutable; the Moral Law irrevocable, which is an obligation of the Creature to obedience, and man having now broken it, and death and wrath threatened thereupon;

thereupon ; I say, whence it comes to pass that the malediction and condemnation is not executed ? no nor perfect obedience exacted, as the nature of the Law requires ? the direct and proper force of the Law is obedience, the secondary and conditional effect of it, is a binding over to the curse upon supposition of disobedience ; yet we see the Law doth neither, and yet the Scripture testifies of the Word, that it's settled for ever in Heaven, the comforts are sure and stand fast for ever and ever, that one tittle of the Law cannot fade : How comes it to pass then, that the Law is neither thoroughly obeyed nor executed ? obeyed it is not, for all have sinned, and by the deeds of the Law is no flesh justified : executed it is not, for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, and they are delivered from the curse of the Law : abrogated or extinguished it is not, for then there were no sin nor duty, reward or punishment : no nor it is not moderated nor favourably interpreted, by rules of equity to abate the rigour of it, for it is inflexible, and the Text saith, *cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written, in the Book of the Law to do them* : therefore there is no way but one, that is, that the Law should so far be dispensed with, as that a surety be accepted instead of the malefactor, this is the blessed design of the Gospel ; God is willing to allow, and accept a surety, Jesus Christ is willing to undertake and perform this office ; and the believer is willing

Psal. 119.

89.

Psal. 111.

78.

Luk. 16,

17.

Rom. 3.

20, 13.

Rom. 8. 1.

Gal. 3. 13.

Gal. 3. 10.

to embrace this blessed *Mediator*, and thus the match is made, and the Covenant is renewed, and the Law is established: yea by this Gospel-way of saving souls, he doth magnifie the Law, and make it honourable; the obligations of the Law are reconciled in *Christ* by the second Covenant, our surety hath fulfilled its duties by his active, undergone its curses by his passive obedience, and both better by *Christ* then ever it was possible for man to satisfie. *Adam* in innocency and the Angelical nature could not have obeyed the Law so perfectly, (at least so meritoriously) as our surety hath done, and if we had lyen for ever in Hell we could not have satisfied justice so as our *Saviour* did by his short, yet infinite sufferings satisfie for our woful breach of divine commands: thus (it is often said) is the Law established, *Christ* was delivered to the Law, and we are delivered from it, and now believing souls are married to *Christ*, and are no more under the malediction of it: God's grace numbred the Saints as *Christ*'s seed, bindeth all in the same lump, and accepteth Man and Wife as one in a Law-sence, so that the Wife shines in the rayes of her Husbands beauty: Divines illustrate it by the similitude of a Wall that is green either by the colour inherent, or else by the same colour in some diaphanous transparent body, as glasse, through which the Sun shining doth affect it with that colour, so *Christ*'s righteousness presents us in his own colour to the Father; so that word

Rom. 3. 31.

8. 2, 3, 4.

Rom. 7.

4, 6.

*uxor suget
radiis ma-
riti.*

is to be understood, Mat. 3. 17. *this is my beloved Son, in whom* (not in whom, as with his person only) but *in whom I am well-pleased* : that is, through his Merits and Mediation I accept of, delight in all that believe and come unto me by him. Oh stupendious contrivance of Free-grace ! we cannot well conceive, nor sufficiently admire the wisdom of God in laying this blessed plot and platform of our Redemption ; rich Grace, and profound Wisdom, seem to outvie each other in this glorious fabrick : if every man, saith one, were as wise as an Angel, and every Angel, a Seraphim (a flame of Cœlestial light of knowledge, and heat of love) they could never have found out such an expedient to reconcile God and Man, the Law and itself ; the very Angels themselves admire it, and would willingly become Schollars to the Church to understand more of the height and depth of this glorious Myserie : but this shall never be rightly understood till souls see him face to face, who devised and effected this work, and their faculties shall be enlarged to take in more of Gods grace and Wisdom. That's the first instruction.

1 Pet. 1. 12.
Eph. 3. 10.

2. Another consequence is this, if the mercies of the Covenant be made sure in Christ, it lets us see the great difference betwixt Covenant-mercies and common mercies, temporal and spiritual mercies. *Saul's* mercies that God takes away, and the sure Mercies of *David* founded upon the Covenant of

Grace, 1 Chron, 17. 13. take the difference principally in these four particulars.

1. They differ in the Fountain, Original, and rise thereof, or in the affection of the giver, outward mercies proceed from common bounty, these Gospel-mercies from special grace; the former from general munificence, the other from peculiar benevolence, the former are but crumbs for dogs, these are bread for Babes, all things come alike to all, so that none can know love or hatred by the want or abundance of Creature-comforts, but the mercies of the Covenant are alwayes tokens of special affection; *Luther* calls the whole Turkish Empire but a morsel cast to doggs, but one dram of Grace is a Childs Patrimony; God hates the wicked though he give them the World; he loves the Godly, though he deny them worldly enjoyments; he may give that to his enemies in anger that he denyes his Children in love: he gives to many wicked, giftless gifts, as some call them; but he gives his grace, his heart, himself, to his Saints with Covenant-mercies: these are always clear evidences of special love: they are Bracelets and Jewels that are sent as love-tokens to the espoused Saint from his Heavenly Husband.

2. They differ in the dimensions of the gifts, their Natures, Properties, and Proportionables to the precious and immortal soul: Temporal mercies may indeed supply the outward man, the cloaths cover nakedness; fire may warm, meat may fill, and drink may quench

See Eccles.
9. 1, 2, 3.

*Deus septem
dat i atus
quod ne at
propitius.*

quench thirst, but all these serve but to supply corporal necessities, they do not reach the soul, he was a fool that said, *soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry*; and well might he be called a fool, for alas, what were these goods to the soul? it was a sensual brutish soul that could be satisfied with these things; they bear no proportion to the nature of the immortal Heaven-born soul, it is above them, and when it acts it self, scorns to feed on such dung or wind; 'tis recorded of *Passes* who called his friends to a banquet, where they should see a Table furnish'd with variety and plenty, but when the guests went to eat, it vanished away into nothing, and truly so will worldly enjoyments, they promise fair and perform nothing; not but that these are useful mercies in their kind, and do attain their end, which was to accommodate the outward man, but they were never designed to satisfy souls: but Covenant-mercies fill and feast the soul, pardon of sin, sense of Gods love, Jesus Christ and the benefits flowing from him, these are adequate to the nature and faculties of precious souls: these satiate the souls both of Priests and people with fatness and goodness; yea they are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house; this living Bread and Water nourisheth immortal souls to eternal life; hence it is that holy David prays, Psal. 40. 11. ———
with-hold not thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, q. d. Lord my soul is a fine delicate thing,

Luke 12.
19, 20.

Jer. 31. 14.
Psal. 36. 8.

thing, it cannot down with this course fare of common mercies, these Husks are for the Swine of the World; I must have Bread at *my Fathers Table*, my soul must have *Angels food*; or it will not like nor live, Lord let me have tender mercies, for my tender soul, otherwise I shall famish and dye, therefore he prays again, *Let thy tender mercies come unto me that I may live*, Psal. 119. 77. and again, ver. 132. *Look upon me and be merciful, as thou usest to do to those that love thy name*, David will not be content with any mercies but Saints peculiar priviledges, and such as accompany salvation: these, these only fit and fill, suit and satisfie the gaping desires of the immortal soul, but other things cannot; for you may as soon fill a sack with wit, as a soul with wealth: Covenant-mercies are only proper for immortal souls; that's the second difference.

3. They differ in their efficacy and operation, in the effects and impressions they leave upon hearts, common mercies never make any better, but many worse; Covenant-mercies always make the subject where they lodge abundance better, common mercies can no more sanctifie, than they can satisfie; a large share of the World hath been a snare to many souls; these things are apt to puff up with pride, to steal the heart from God, to beget carnal confidence and security; which prove the bane of grace, and a bait to sin: they that have tryed it, find that it's hard to have worldly honour without vain-glory,

*Difficile est
esse in honore
sine tumore.*
Bern.

glory, to have great estates without a covetous desire, and to swim in worldly pleasures without too much sensual delight : Oh the sad demonstrations we have had of the truth of this ! how may the souls of thousands sadly say the world hath undone them ? it's Syren-songs have bewicht the credulous, and unwary soul ; the world oftentimes proves a stumbling block of iniquity that obstructs souls in their journey to Heaven, and blinds their eyes that they cannot make divine discoveries : even good souls have found this sad experiment, that outward enjoyments have had a malignant influence upon their spirits ; they were in a better frame when they are poor, then they are since raised in the World : according to that Distich.

*Pellitus nunc es, fueras sine vestibulante,
Nudus eras purus, crimen amicitus habes.*

Well this is the too too common effect of common mercies, but Covenant-mercies always make the soul better ; certainly sanctifying knowledge, softening Grace, the spirit of faith, and holiness leave the soul in a gracious frame, and the privileges of the Covenant, reconciliation with God, Adoption, Justification, Assurance, Communion with God, alwayes work kindly and Evangelically upon the heart ; these are so many Silver and Silken Cords of Love to draw and joyn the soul to God, these mercies
are

*Dives qui
multa possi-
det, aut o
sordidum
marsupium,
at qui justus
est, bene
compositus
est & de o-
mnibus —
Cem. A-
lex. pædag.*

are as Coals of fire to melt the heart, and make the conscience supple and pliable to the will of God ; that cannot be a wicked soul that hath these Mercies, and he that hath most of these mercies is the best ; our perfection consists in possession and participation of these Sure Mercies of David : outward mercies are occasions of ripening wicked mens sins, to fit them for Hell ; but Covenant-mercies ripen Saints for glory, by filling their souls with Grace and filling them for Gods use both here and hereafter.

4. Common-mercies and Covenant-mercies differ in their duration and continuance ; and this is the discriminating note in this Text, they are called Sure Mercies, in opposition to those uncertain riches, *that take to themselves wings and fly away ; also the fashion of the world passeth away ;* earthly enjoyments are but of a short continuance, at death they and we must part, but many times they leave us before we leave them, the dreadful example of many thousands in London in the late astonishing burning confirms this, that were very rich and very poor in a few hours ; many worth thousands in the Morning, but before Night had not an House to put their head in : our eyes have seen and ears have heard how suddenly vast estates have been pluckt out of the hands of the securest possessours ; a night may put an end to the rich fools confident boasting ; no man is rich who cannot carry away with him that which he hath, what we must leave behind

*Nemo dives
est, qui quod
habet, se-
cum hinc
auferre non
potest.
Ambros.*

hind us is not ours, but some others ; and this is the certain end of these uncertain enjoyments ; that lose them we must ; and we know not when or how ; and what a condition will a poor worldling be in, when his God and he must be parted ? But now these mercies of the Covenant are lasting, yea everlasting mercies, they continue even beyond this transitory life, and run paralel with the life of God, and line of Eternity, eternal life is in the rear of spiritual life ; Grace ends in Glory ; yea an immortal Crown is one of the mercies of this sure Covenant : these are a treasure that is neither subject to inward decays nor outward violence, *no Moth can corrupt it, nor Thief steal it, Mat, 6. 19, 20.*

Well then, since this be the vast difference betwixt common and Covenant mercies ; why should we make so great account of the former, and so little of the latter ? what need have we to advance our hearts and eyes to things that are not seen with bodily eyes, and not dote upon things that are seen ? our souls must resolve with brave Luther, *I earnestly protested I would not be put off with these things ;* alas, what poor things are outward enjoyments ? consider the differences mentioned ; God may hate you though you abound with worldly comforts, but Covenant-mercies are infallible tokens of God's love : these gifts are not suitable and satisfying to the soul, the other are ; outward mercies will make you no better in the eyes

2 Cor. 4.
18.
*Valaè pro-
testatus sum
me istis non
satis i.*

of

of God or good men, but spiritual will render you truly good; the world will take its sudden farewell of you and fail you at your greatest need, Covenant-mercies will stick by you while you live, and bring you blameless before his Throne in Eternal glory: here will come in that usual distinction of *Bona throni*, and *Bona scabelli*, 'tis these Covenant-mercies that are the good things of the Throne; outward mercies are but the good things of the foot-stool; let Heaven-born souls mount up to the mercies of the Throne, but let the Moon and all sublunary enjoyments be under their feet; the whole World is too little for the godly man's soul, not but that we should be thankful for the least common mercy; but we should not be put off with the greatest; a little of the World should content a Christian with God, all the World should not content him without God; Oh how sweet are common-mercies when they come to us in a Covenant-way? a morsel sprinkled with Christ's blood hath a delicate relish; this only takes away the poyson, venom, and malignity that guilt hath brought upon the Creature, and reduceth all things to their pristine usefulness, and primitive perfection. Oh the happiness of the Saints! they have all they do enjoy as so many tokens of love; as its said that *Cyrus* his kiss to *Chrysanias* was better Gold than the costly Cup of Gold that he gave to *Artabarus*. So common mercies perfumed with Covenant-love are transcendently better than

than the richest Treasures of wretched Worldlings : that's the second instruction.

3. Another inference is this, if Covenant-mercies be thus sure, then it instructs us in the precedency of Grace above gifts, there are gifts of illumination, conviction, interpretation, elocution, Prayer, Propheſie, which are given for the Churches edification; the main difference betwixt gifts and grace is that the former may languish, vanish and utterly periſh, but Grace never totally and finally decays; God may give *Saul* a ſpirit of Government, *Judas* a gift of Preaching and Miracles, *Simon Magus* a temporary faith, and yet repent him of theſe and pluck them quite away : he may and often doth dry up the right arm of an Idol idle ſhepherd, and darkens his right eye of knowledge, *Zach. 11. 17.* ſo that he improves not Talents of gifts, *from him ſhall be taken away that which he hath*, even real gifts and ſhews of Grace, perſons eminently gifted may be fire-brands of Hell : men may fall from the cleareſt intellectuals to brutiſh ſenſuality; but theſe gifts and callings of ſaving grace are without repentance; *God loveth his own to the end*, gracious habits ſhall not be loſt; the Apoſtle elegantly expreſſeth the difference to my hand, in *1 Cor. 13. 8.* *Charity (i. e. ſaving grace) never faileth but whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail, whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be knowledge it ſhall vaniſh away:*

Gifts come upon other terms than Grace, God gives grace as a free-hold, it hath the promiſe of this and another World, but gifts come upon liking: though a father will not caſt off his Child, yet he may take away his fine Coat, and ornaments, if he be proud of them. *Mr. Gurnal. Chriſt. armour. Mat. 25. 29. Luk. 8. 18.*

away: I know the main intent of the place is to commend love above other saving graces from the duration and perpetuity of it, that it shall continue and be of use in Heaven; yet here 'tis opposed to such gifts as may also be lost in this life; and however by consequence it will follow, that the one is separable from its subject the other not: natural men may make a fair shew and flourish with fine gifts, which are, as it were, the trimming and ornament of Grace, which yet may through negligence or old age decay and wither, true grace may be accompanied with the guildings and varnish of gifts, which may in time wear off, whilst a sound principle continues fresh and lively. Besides this, give me leave to add other four differences betwixt common gifts and saving graces.

1. They differ in respect of their Fountain and spring, the original from whence they flow, *gifts* (as one saith) *come from Gods treasury of bounty*, Grace proceeds from the choice Cabinet of his Love, *Grace flows to the elect, through the blood of Christ from Gods bowels of tender love*; gifts proceed from the hand of God as an act of munificence upon his sons glorious ascension and compleat inauguration; and 'tis one thing to eat meat at the Kings table, and another thing to gather the fruits of Royal Grace upon some solemn day, as that was of *Dauids*, 2 Sam. 6. 19. Saints only have the Covenant-graces, hypocrites may have a large share

in these gifts, nay a larger portion than some Saints themselves : *Saul, Balaam, Caiaphas* may have the gift of Prophecy ; *Judas*, he may Preach, but *Thomas* and the elect only can believe, and it's a greater work, saith *Luther*, *to believe, than to work miracles* : that's the first.

Prestat credere quam miracula edere.

2. They differ in their nature and manner of operation ; Covenant-grace stamps on the elect-soul the image of our Heavenly Father, it is the divine nature ; God's most curious workmanship, the idea and pourtrai-cture, the representation and exemplar of God blessed for ever ; grace is Gods picture (if I may so speak) drawn to the life ; 'tis a forming of Christ in the soul, now gifts are no such thing ; the devil himself hath great gifts, yet hath razed out the image of God ; gifts are but the works of Gods power and wisdom, such as the Sun and Starrs ; yea even the flies and atomes, they are in a sort dead, and we may call them Gods lumber ; some have noted that gifts are only the effects, but graces are called the fruits of the Spirit : the one is the husk of a common profession, at least the shell of some rare endowments ; but the other is the kernel of sincerity, and fruit of a Gospel-conversion.

1 Cor. 12.
Gal. 5. 22.

3. They differ in their train and retinue, as to gifts none have all, either of all sorts, or any great eminency in all, hence 'tis said, 1 Cor. 12. 8, 9 — *to one is given the word of wisdom, to another knowledge, &c.* *Moses* had a gift of Government, not of Eloquence ;

Paul

Paul had a gift of Planting, *Apollos* of Watering; some of the Apostles were sons of Thunder, others of consolation; some Ministers are fitter for opening Scriptures, clearing Controversies, others are more for exhortation and conviction of the Conscience; some think that Pastors and Teachers differ with respect to their different gifts. But these Covenant-graces and mercies are linked together, they dance their round in the believing soul, hand in hand, as the word signifies, *2 Pet. 1. 5.* one grace strengthens another, as stones do in an arch; yea all graces are radically in faith; for some have said, that every grace is but faith exercised; however, all graces are infused at once into the soul, though some got the leading as to exercise, the new man is perfect with a perfection of parts, though not of degrees, as it is with a new-born Child.

4. Gifts and Grace differ in their several designs, ends, and effects, gifts, offices; privileges are but for others advantage, and edification; they are given to profit withal, *1 Cor. 12. 7.* When Christ ascended, he gave gifts to men, — for what end? the Apostle tells us *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Ephes. 4. 8, — 12.* But now the end of Grace is the souls spiritual advantage, that by them Christ might take possession of the heart, that the soul may have some life and principle of opposition to beloved corruptions, and thereby be better

ΕΠΙΧΟΡΗ-
ΓΗΣΑΤΕ.

better helped to perform religious duties, walk with God, improve priviledges, and be made meet for Heaven: these and such like are the ends of the Graces of the Covenant; a man may have rare gifts, yet have a base heart, singular endowments, and yet not be helped thereby to mortifie one lust, perform one duty spiritually, get one step nearer God; but Covenant-grace is profitable for these great ends and uses: gifts and Grace may be said to differ as the Sun and Moon; the Moon casts a light indeed but no heat, but the Sun casts its quickning rays into this lower World, and quickens many things, and maketh all things verdant and fruitful: so doth Covenant-mercy bring forth many precious things, and divine graces have a lively influence whereby a man shall both save himself, and those that hear him, *1 Tim.* 4. 16. but a man may have gifts like an Angel, and be never the nearer to Heaven, he may direct others in the way to Heaven, and yet not walk a step therein, teach others what he hath not learned himself; Preach to others and be a cast-away; it's one thing to have the form of knowledge, another to have the power of grace; it is one thing to have Angelical gifts, and another thing to have Evangelical graces: all gifted persons are not gracious persons, never was any man saved by his gifts, and rarely have they been instruments to save others, that have only gifts: I dare not say, that 'tis impossible that a graceless, yet gifted, Minister should be a

See fully in
Rom. 2. 17,
to 24.
1 Cor. 9. 27.

H

mean

mean of Conversion, (for God is not to be limited) but 'tis not ordinary, as common experience testifies.

The fourth Inference is, if Covenant-mercies be thus sure, then it lets us see the truth of our Religion ; if the mercies thereof be thus sure (as I have demonstrated) then let us be established in our perswasions of the verity, certainty and infallibility of Christianity, if these be sure mercies, who can doubt of the reality thereof ? every thing in the Gospel is made sure ; you may venture your souls upon it, since God hath confirmed these things as a sacred Oracle from Heaven, who dare dispute them ? the God of truth cannot lye nor deny himself ; he is so good that he cannot deceive, and so wise that he cannot be deceived ; there is in him neither imprudence in promising nor impotency in performing : *Heaven and Earth may pass away, but not one iota of his word shall fail* : You are to believe these things without hesitation, and give your full assent to them ; as the myserie of Godliness is great, so 'tis without Controversie ; *Grotius* observes that our Christian Religion doth transcend all the Religions in the World in three things, 1. In the certainty of Maxims. 2. In the spirituality of its Precepts. 3. In the transcendency of its rewards : We have the un-erring testimony of Heaven, for what we believe, which is surer than any Logical Conclusions, Philosophical Speculations ; yea or Mathematical Demonstrations ; and I may add, than their

*Divino
præcepto
intonante
obediendum
est non dis-
putandum.
Aug.*

Old Testament Dreams and Visions ; so the Apostle seems to extoll Gods speaking to us by his Son above the diverse manners of his speaking to the Fathers, *Heb. 1. 1, 2.* Nay the Apostle *Peter* asserts that we have in the Scriptures a more sure word of Propheſie, than that voice which came to Chriſt in the Holy Mount, from the excellent glory, *2 Pet. 1. 18, 19.* not that any thing can be more ſure than the very undoubted words of *Jeſuah*, who is truth it ſelf ; but a more ſure, *i. e.* moſt ſure, a comparative for a ſuperlative, for the former viſions being from God alſo, as the Propheſies were, was in it ſelf as ſure as they ; but the meaning is that the Scripture-teſtimony is more ſure than that viſion argumentatively, as to others, or ſecondum nos, for the authority of the Scriptures is beyond the Teſtimony of Angels; nay above the credit that any will give to men, for men might ſuſpect *Peter* and the other Apoſtles, as though this apparition were but a fiction of their own brains, therefore he appeals to the undoubted Propheſies of the Old Teſtament, which were by long uſe ſettled in the hearts of the Godly *Jews*, who believed all that the Prophets ſpoke as coming from God : therefore our Saviour makes account that they that believe not *Moses's* Writings, will not believe his words, *Joh. 5. 45, 47.* and hence it was that they examined Doctrines by the Prophets ; nay our Saviour himſelf affirms, *that if they will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be per-*

Aut hac admittenda religio, non tantum ab ſactorum teſtimonia, de quibus jam egimus, verum etiam ab eo que reli- gionis ſunt in- trinſeca cum nulla ex omnibus ſeculis ac na- tionibus proferri po- teſt ; aut premio ex- cellentior, præceptis perfectior, aut modo propagari juſſa eſt ad- mirabilior. Hug. Gror. de veritat. Relig. Chriſt. lib. 2. cap. 9. p. 52. Joh. 9 29. Act. 26. 22, 23. Act. 17. 11.

Habebant
Apostoli
prophetas
tanquam
patronos
doctrinae
sue; fideles
quoq; inde
petebant
Evangelii
confirmati-
onem: Calv.
in loc.
Videsi.
Mart. Aret.
8c. in Lo-
cum.

swaded though one rise from the dead, Luk. 16. 31. therefore the Apostles had the Prophets as patrons of their Doctrine, and thence did the faithful fetch a confirmation of the Gospel: the summ of this Text is then, to demonstrate the verity and certainty of the Gospel by evidencing the consent of Prophetical and Apostolical Testimony for its fuller confirmation; *q. d.* if you distrust me in commending the Evangelical Doctrine, I send you back to the Prophets, whom without all exception, you account Holy and Faithful; these testifie of the truth of the Gospel, therefore this consent is to be evincing and satisfying. Hence it is that the disciples of Christ have professed such a plerophory, and abundant acquiescence in their persuasions of Christs being the Messiah and Saviour of mankind; so Joh. 6. 69. *We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*; and Simon Peter acknowledged it, *Matt. 16. 16.* Yea unbelieving Thomas at last cried out, *my Lord and my God*, Joh. 20. 28. as being overcome with the clearness of that stupendious condescending demonstration the Apostle John testifies 1 Ep. 1. 1. concerning Christ, saying, *We have heard, seen with our eyes, looked upon, yea our hands have handled of the Word of life*: and this doth he declare to us from experience of several senses: Oh what a blessed thing were it to have an undoubted assurance of the certainty of divine things! Oh what life would it put into our graces, duties, comforts? what an Anti-

dote

dote would it be againſt temptations, cor-
 ruptions, perfecutions? could we as really
 believe the reality of the things of God as
 Corporeal objects, what beauty ſhould we
 diſcern therein? what comfort ſhould we
 receive there-from? what would we not do
 and endure for them? did we ſee the reality,
 neceſſity and excellency of Covenant-mercies
 as we do of common mercies, how ſhould
 our hearts be enamoured therewith? they
 that have the moſt prevailing perſwaſions of
 the certainty and tranſcendency of heavenly
 mercies, are the moſt exact and eminent
 Chriſtians; but a faint belief of theſe things
 is the cauſe of ſloth; all irreligion and pro-
 phaneneſs proceedeth from a want of an ef-
 fectual aſſent to Goſpel-revelations; alas,
 there is more Atheiſm and Infidelity in the
 World than we are aware of: did men as
 certainly believe there is an Heaven and Hell,
 as they ſee and know there is Stones and
 Trees, Earth and Water, would not this have
 ſtrange influence upon their praćtices? would
 they not be other manner of perſons than
 they are? eſpecially if they did faithfully
 work upon their hearts the reality of the
 things of God: *Paul* and the Saints in his
 days lookt not on the things ſeen, but on
 things not ſeen, i. e. eternal things, 2 *Cor.*
 4. 18. *Mofes* ſaw him that was inviſible, that
 made him to endure any thing, *Heb.* 11. 27.
 O Chriſtians, reſt not ſatiſfied with a bare
 conjecture, but preſs forward till you arrive
 at a full aſſurance, you cannot be too ſure in

these cases; the Apostle hath a mighty full expression, *Col. 2. 2.* to this purpose, *ver. 1.* he tells of *a conflict that he had for them, and the Laodiceans, i. e.* a care, fear, desire; good man, he was in a heart-rending conflict, an agony: Why, what's the matter? why, 'tis that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystrie of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; observe the Climax, here is 1. Assurance he desires for them; then 2. Full assurance; further, 3. Riches of full assurance; Yet again, 4. All Riches of full Assurance; yea, not a rash and ignorant, but such an assurance, 5. Of understanding, *i. e.* with a settled judgement, and not only to have such assurance, and keep it to themselves, but all this 6. To the acknowledgement of the mystrie of God, that they may make an open profession of it. But why was he so earnest for all this, *ver. 4. this I say (or pray for you) lest any man beguile you with enticing words; Q. d.* You'll find all this little enough when a subtle disputer shall set upon you with cunning artifice to draw you from the truth; you will perhaps feel that you have need of the fullest perswasion that Creatures can arrive unto, that you may keep your hold, and not be driven away from the hope of the Gospel; you little know what storms may assault your faith of the truth of the Gospel; Peter made a glorious profession, yet his faith

faith was staggered in a temptation : and Satan is a cunning Sophister, he desires to have you that he may sift you, and toss you so as to shake away the purest grain of Gospel-truth ; he will do what he can to cheat you of your Religion ; hence is it, that Paul was so jealous over the Corinthians with Godly jealousy — lest by any means (and he hath store of devices) as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty ; so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 1 — 3. hence is it that teachers have always been so careful to settle and ground their hearers in the certainty of the things they taught, as Luke his Theophilus, Luk. 1. 3, 4. and Paul his Timothy. Oh sirs, get well assured of these things, let your faith and persuasion have its full dimensions ; let it be deeply rooted, and high built, take not things upon trust, let every truth have its full emphasis and efficacy upon your hearts, and Consciences, especially the main momentous Gospel-truths, that you must venture your souls upon, and live and dye by : you had need consider what ground you stand upon, and be fully perswaded in your own minds.

But so much for the second Use.

CHAP. VIII.

III. **T**He third Use is, of *Examination*, to try us whether we have a real interest in these sure mercies of the Covenant, it is one of the greatest questions that we can be asked, whether we have a right title to Covenant-mercies? alas we have forfeited our title to God, or to any good thing from him, by our breach of the Old Covenant, and now we have nothing to do with God, except only to endure the severe strokes of his sin-revenging justice. Oh what need have we to try our selves by an impartial scrutiny? For our better assistance in this great and weighty business, I shall a little open what it is to enter into Covenant in general, and then enquire what conditions of the new Covenant we can find in our hearts, and then shew a little of the nature and effects of these Covenant-mercies where they are.

For the first, to enter into Covenant with God is to own God as our God, and to give up our selves wholly to him as his; expressed in these words in Scripture, *I will be thy God and thou shalt be my people*, this, this is the Marrow of the Covenant, for God to be our God, it is a comprehensive word, it is [*substantia fœderis*] as *Funius* calls it, [*anima fœderis*] as *Pareus* calls it, [*caput fœderis*] as *Musail*; the substance-soul, and

and head of the Covenant, the life of Religion is in this, as one saith sweetly, the goodness of duties lyes in Adverbs, and the sweetness of the Covenant lyes in possessives.

Well then, the contracting of this Covenant betwixt God and a soul consists chiefly in a mutual reddition, or giving up themselves each to other, expressed in Scripture by a Matrimonial contract, when God gives up himself to the soul, and accepts of him, and the soul accepts of God as his God, and gives up himself to him, now we are not to enquire after the act of God, for 'tis fully expressed in the Scriptures, and it is certainly supposed God accepts the sinner, when the sinner accepts of God, for these are relatives, nor is this any change in God, the change is only in the sinner, who is now put into a new state and relation; it is certain by the free offers of the Gospel, that God doth consent, and the main thing to be enquired into is whether the soul do consent or no; for if it cordially do, the match is made, God and the soul are marryed, which is a thing of the greatest importance in the whole World; I shall purposely wave controversies in this business wherein this consent lyes, whether it be only an assent, an act of the understanding, or it be a choice, an act of the Will, &c. I conceive 'tis an act of the whole soul, whereby a poor troubled sinner discovering its forlorn estate by its breach of the Old Covenant, and sad consequences

See Mr.
Baxt. Saints
Rest. Part 1.
p. 177, 178.

quences thereof, and discerning a possibility of a recovery and the way of reconciliation by a new Covenant contrived and contracted betwixt God and fallen man, sealed and confirmed, by the blood of a Mediator, God-man, doth freely, cordially, and constantly accept of God as his chiefest good, and ultimate end, and give up himself to him resolvedly, unreservedly, and universally, to be the Lords; to be and do what the Lord pleaseth, to obey divine commands, be at God's dispose in life and death, and thus to continue even to the end of his days.

This is for a soul to enter into Covenant with the Lord, the tryal will lye in these two things; 1. Whether we have accepted of God as our God: 2. Whether we have given up our selves to him, to be at his dispose, yea or no? a little of both these.

1. Whether have you taken the Lord to be yours, or no. We are all naturally Idolaters and have our hearts glued to the Creature or something else besides God; we are of those many, that cry out, *who will shew us any good?* and trace the whole Creation to find satisfaction, till we are weary, and sit down despairing of obtaining what we seek, for all the creatures are forced to eccho this unanimous vote, happiness is not in me; thus (like *Hagar*) we wander in this howling wilderness, till the Water of hope be spent in the bottle, and our souls (like *Ishmael*) be ready to perish under the shrubs of guilt and wrath, and then we sit down

Gen. 21.
14, 16, 17,
18, 19.

in sorrow, ready to pine away in our iniquities, loth to see or think of our own damnation, lifting up our voice with bitter weeping, and despair. God hears and asks the troubled soul what it ailes, and under these confusions he creates a blessed spring of hope in this desert-state ; opens the eyes, ravisheth the heart with the glory of Gospel-grace, draws Water of life out of the well of salvation, and satisfieth the hungry soul with good things, makes the ransomed sinner own that God that thus owns him in a time of need, and to cry out as repenting *Israel* : *once, O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name, Isa. 26. 13. or as David, Psal. 73. 25. whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever, ver. 26. as if the poor soul should say, I have been long seeking contentment here below, but I see by sad experience, all things fail, there's vanity and vexation writ upon the sweetest comforts under the Moon ; I have laid out much labour for that which profits not ; I am weary with my disappointments, I will return to my first Husband ; return unto thy rest, O my soul. God alone is the most, (yea, the only) suitable and satisfying rest of my wandring and bewildred soul ; let others go a whoring from God to creature-props, 'tis good for me to draw nigh to God. I am undone without*

without him, I am sick of love for him, woe is me, what shall I do? if my soul get not an interest in God I faint, I dye, I am damned; Lord put me not off without thy self, let nothing take up my heart besides thee; let all the pleasures, profits, honours of the World go whither they will so I may have my God, I can set one God against them all, if God be the portion of mine inheritance,

Psal. 16. I can say truly *the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage*, I can bid defiance to all the world to make me miserable, when all the World looks black about me, and all my comforts forsake me, when seeming friends scorn me, and real enemies pursue me with cruel hatred; I can then encourage my self in the Lord my God. Yea rejoyce in the Lord; yea, when the whole Creation cracks about my ears, and the Earth trembles, the Heavens are rolled together as a scroll; I know that my Redeemer lives and I shall live with him in blifs and blessedness for ever—— these or the like are the musings of the Covenanted soul, and though it cannot say the Lord is his, yet he can say, through grace, that it is the desire of his soul to have the Lord for his God, he looks upon that as the happiest estate that a Creature is capable of, and if God should say this House or Land, or Goods, or this Kingdom, or this world is thine, except he say withall, I am thine, the soul goes away disconsolate, and looks on all those as nothing worth.

Christians,

Christians, try your selves, hath it been thus with you, or hath it not? what settled, prevailing account hath the God of Heaven in your hearts? do you look upon all the bravery and delights of the World but as straw and dirt under your feet in comparison of your God? do your hearts pant after the living God? do your souls desire him in the night? can you boast of your God, and challenge all the world; and say, there's none like unto our God? can you depend upon him, and cast all your care on him: do you in all things give him the preheminence? are your hearts endeared to, and enamoured with this glorious gracious God?

2. But I proceed, whether have you given up your selves to him? for if you be the Lords, you are not your own, you have wholly resigned up your selves to him; you have given him the Keys of your hearts, and delivered him possession of your souls, as the only rightful owner thereof: just as the Wife gives up her all to her husband; so that *she hath* 1 Cor. 6. 19.
no power of her own body, but her Husband; so doth the soul surrender it self unto its spiritual Husband, so that now it hath nothing to dispose of without its husbands leave; house, land, money, estates, relations, name, time, gifts of mind, members of body: faculties of soul, life it self, and all things he is, hath, doth, are at Gods dispose, and he lays them all at his Husbands feet, and dare not dispose of one penny in his purse, or minute

minute of his time, or cast of his eye, or thought of his heart (by his good will) without his Husbands leave; hence you shall hear a Covenanted soul inquiring after sin and duty, and making Conscience of compliance with the Lords will and pleasure: the Scripture calls this a giving our selves to the Lord, 2 Cor. 8. 5. yea, there are several outward symbols to evidence it, Isa. 44. 5. *one shall say I am the Lords, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel*; Profession, Subscription, Denomination; nay though it be to endure the scorn of a reproachful nick-name, any thing would he do, so he might be ranked amongst real Saints, and be indeed the Lords.

And there are four properties of the souls self-delivery to God. A Covenanting soul gives up it self to God these four ways, viz.

1. Really.
2. Readily.
3. Resolvedly.
4. Unreservedly.

1. Really, Truly, Sincerely, without the ordinary, counterfeiting and complementing that is in the World; 'tis as easie as it is common for men to Court others with that empty Ceremony; Your servant, Sir, when they never think as they speak, this (by the way) is to be ranked (at least) amongst idle words, of which (I fear) many have sad account to give; let professors learn bet-

ter manners and language, than to conform herein to the world ; well, but a Saints giving up himself to the Lord, is not complementary but real, here holy *David*, you shall find him in good earnest, *Psal. 116. 16. O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the Son of thine hand-maid, thou hast loosed my bonds : Here's 1. An Asseveration, truly. 2. An affirmation, I am thine. 3. A duplication, I am, and I am thy servant. 4. A confirmation by two Arguments, 1. He was his servant by his birth, being born in his house, for if a Woman was servant in an house, all the Children she bore there were servants to the master of that house ; hence saith David, the son of thy hand-maid. 2. David was God's by Redemption, thou hast loosed my bonds, for such as delivered any from captivity had them to be their servants for ever : thus every gracious soul really professeth See *Exod. 21. 4, 5, 6.* himself to be the Lords, he is God's bought and bored Servant, he doth (as the servant of old) plainly say, *I love my master, I will not go out*, and so is brought to the door-post, and hath his ear bored through with an Aule, he receives an ear-mark, being board by the blessed spirit of God, and so made willing and obedient to the Lord's calls, this ingageth him to be much in desiring to know the Lord's will with a resolution to do it ; he stops not his ear, hides not his eyes from his Master's commands, but prays as *David, Psal. 119. 125. I am thy servant,**

servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies,; a good soul would not be ignorant of any part of its work, because he is a real servant, and makes Conscience of upright obedience: Ah sirs, what say your hearts to this? are you in good earnest? do you indeed speak as you think, and will you do accordingly? it's no jesting, trifling matter? *Israel gave God good words*; so that God saith, they have well spoken, when they promised to be the Lords and to obey him, but God adds, *O that there were such a heart in them that they would fear me, &c.* Deut. 5. 28, 29. Alas persons may say fair in a flush of affection, but enquire you into the frame of your spirits and actions whether you be real.

2. This self-delivery to God is ready, free, willing, and chearful, not with grumbling, and by compulsion; when persons do it because they cannot help it, when they see they must dye, and can serve the Devil no longer, or under the rod, only they will be for a fit and start religious; but it is full sore against their wills, for they would rather choose to be slaves to lust, but they are taken off by violence or constraint, or else they lye under such terrours and convictions, that for present they are over-awed, and dare not but profess to be the Lords, it is strangers that yield feigned or forced obedience to our *David*. But the Lord's true hearted subjects shall be a willing people in the day of his power, *Psal. 110. 3.* voluntariness

Psal. 18. 44.
See *Marg.*

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rinesses or liberalities ; so the word signifies, they are all volunteers, and look upon it as their privilege, honour and happiness to be the Lord's servants, as the good Emperour *Theodosius*, that accounted it greater honour to be the subject of Christ, than to be Emperour of the World. Real Christians are like Judg. 5. 9. the Governours of *Israel*, that offered themselves willingly among the People ; these have God's heart, since the Lord hath their heart : those in *Act. 2. 41.* gladly received the Word, and so were Baptized ; every Child of God is a free-will offering, and presents his soul and body as a living sacrifice (or *Holocaust*) and this is acceptable to God. Oh the account that God makes of these ! they are called Princes of the people, *Psal. 47. 9.* the *Marg.* hath it, the voluntary of the people, volunteers are Princes, (as indeed all Gods Saints are Kings, and the Church hath her Princes in all the Earth) *Psal. 45. 16.* because they have power over their base stubborn wills, which is more than to rule over millions of men ; these are persons of most noble, generous, and ingenuous spirits, others are of a low, base, sordid, degenerate spirit, that have not subjected themselves to God, but are slaves to their lusts. Well sirs, how is it with you ; do you voluntarily, and cheerfully surrender your selves to the Lord, as a Maid doth in Marriage to the person she loves ? are your hearts so gone after the Lord, as to look upon it as your greatest preferment, to be joynd to so sweet an Husband ? have

I you

Cant. 6. 12.

you seriously deliberated things in your breasts; and upon mature thoughts concluded that this is the best match you can make? doth your soul make you like *the Chariots of Amminadab*, or a willing people? and the longer you serve this Master, the better do you like this service: You do not repent that you gave up your names to him, if it were to do again, you would do it, though you knew of ten thousand times more troubles in your way than yet you have met with; nay you thank God heartily that he will accept of your persons and services: and you look upon his service as perfect freedom: is it thus with you, bless God, he hath brought you into Covenant.

3. The Covenanted soul delivers up it self to God resolvedly; there are some that halt between two opinions, that are off and on; one while they will be for God, another while they are staggering, like the *Samaritans*: when the *Jews* were in prosperity, they would profess to be of their stock, when in adversity they disowned relation to them, these are a Cake half-baked, the one side baked for God, the other side dough; so that one cannot tell what to make of them; God likes not these unfixed unresolved spirits: but a real Saint will have God whatever it cost him; like a Woman, that will have such a Man, though she beg with him; friends may set their hearts at rest, there's no dissuading her, for her affections are placed, all bonds cannot hold her; just thus is it with a poor soul,

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Act. 11. 23
Psal. 119.

soul, it cleaves to the Lord with full purpose of heart, it hath devoted it self to God's fear, there's no revocation; carnal friends, say nothing, that go about to hinder the souls match, he will strike this blessed bargain in spite of all opposition; all the Devils in Hell, and Men on Earth, shall not obstruct his course and motion to the Lord, *if my Father hang'd about my neck, (saith an Ancient) my Wife and Children stood in my way to my dearly beloved, I would fling off my Father, throw down my Wife, trample on my Children that I may enjoy my Lord God:* offer a resolved soul, House, Lands, Pleasures, Treasures, they all signifie nothing if they be to hire him from Christ; *let their money perish with them* (said that noble Marquess) *that esteem all the money in the World worth one hours Communion with Jesus Christ:* consider Moses and Paul, the first forsook the pleasures of Pharaohs Court for Christ, the latter accounted not his life dear in the cause of Christ: and indeed this is the great condition upon which we can only have an interest in him, Luk. 14. 26. *if any man come to me, and hate not his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple, i. e.* when these stand in competition with Christ; or when he cannot keep both; *if he will not be willing to part with these rather than want Christ, he is not worthy of him,* as another Evangelist hath it: Ah sirs, how is it with you? are you at a point? do you hang no longer in

Heb. 11.
24, 25.
Act. 20. 24.

Mat. 10. 37.

Psal. 119.

59, 60.

Eph. 6. 15

suspence? will you have Christ upon his own proposed terms? and will you have him now? and not delay a moment longer; do you say that upon due considering your ways, *you make haste and will not delay, to give up your selves to the Lord? are your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, i. e. with an holy resolution to go through sharpest paths to your beloved? you care not what befalls you; so that this dreadful evil do not befall you to be without God in the World, and many waters of opposition cannot quench this flaming love to your dearest Lord: try your selves by this note.*

4. A gracious soul delivers up it self to God, unreservedly, entirely, and universally, and that both with reference to the subject, and the season, the whole soul, and that for ever, 1. *Totally.* 2. *Finally,*

1. The whole soul is given up to God in this Covenant-match; here do hypocrites dodge, and article, and make reserves, and come not off fair, but leave some sort of the heart for a lust, and are not willing to give up themselves entirely; now God will have all the heart, or none at all, he will not brook a corrival or competitour, *my son give me thy heart*, and indeed the whole soul is a present little enough for the God of Heaven, it is a whorish heart that's for dividing; a gracious soul saith, let him have all, as it cannot be content with half a Saviour, so it knows God will not be content with

with half a soul, and therefore cries out Lord, here I am poor worm, I have polluted my self with sin, and deserve not that ever thou shouldst own such a wretch as I am; yet such as I am, I here offer my self wholly to thee; alas I am but a poor and sorry present for so great a King, yet I freely give my self to thee, intreating thee to make me better; I cannot bestow my self on one that either hath more right to me, or can do more for me; here I am Lord, I am only thine and wholly thine; take me as thine, and make me less mine own, and that will be my happiness, and I shall be fitter for thy service; I dare not part stakes betwixt thy self and any other, for I see, I cannot serve two contrary Masters; I will not give my faculties or members any more as instruments of unrighteousness; chain my soul to thee, unite my heart to fear thy name. This or such like is the language of a Covenanting-soul, and there can be no Covenant without this intireness and compleat resignation; hence are those multitudes of expressions that call for *a seeking God with the whole heart, and a loving God with all the heart, soul, &c. and serving God with all the heart*, yea this is the summ of all that God requires of us, *Deut. 10. 12.* O try then, hath the spirit of God beat down every strong hold and vain imagination; and brought over your hearts wholly to the Lord? what say you, is every nook and creek of your hearts delivered up to this great

Deut. 10. 12. 29.
c. 65.

and mighty Conquerour? is there no Creature-comfort, or sensual pleasure that hath stollen away your hearts from your dearly beloved? deal faithfully with your souls on this behalf, there is no dallying with the searcher of your hearts.

2, Have you given up your hearts and selves irrevocably, irreversibly, finally? there's no playing fast and loose with the great God, you must not give and take again, that's fools play: but you must be for ever the Lords, all your days, devote your selves to keep his commandments unto the end, not like some servants that will keep to their Masters, as long as they like, or while they please them, but this is a boaring through the ear to be the Lord's servants for ever; it's a marriage that lasts for term of life, *I will call upon him, saith David, as long as I live*, Psal. 116. 2. it is the hollow-hearted Hypocrite that ends his Religion before he have ended his days, that puts his hand to the Plow and looks back, that falls off when tribulation comes; but a Covenanting spirit is a constant spirit; whose house are we, saith the Apostle, *if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firmly unto the end*, Heb. 3. 6. it is the end that crowns the action; Solomon saith, *the end of a thing is better than the beginning*: Christ saith, *if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*, Joh. 8. 31. and many Scriptures make this a condition without which no salvation: and though the

Col. 1. 23.

1 Tim. 4.

16.

Jam. 1. 25.

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the end is not yet come, yet is it the desire and design of your souls to pray, and read and serve God all your days? you do not, you dare not set bounds, limits to your obedience; but say as *David*, Psal. 71. 14. *I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more, q. d. I am so far from casting away my hope and faith that I will continue, yea and increase in the exercises of Religion: do you resolve with David to keep Gods Law continually, yea for ever and ever, Psal. 119. 44. and praying still for supporting Grace, v. 117. using all the rest of God's appointed means for your perseverance to the end.*

Thus I have dispatcht this part of the tryal, which is general, to try whether we be entred into Covenant with God by these reciprocal acts of giving and receiving, whether you have taken God for your God, and given up your selves to him, as Covenanted souls are wont to do: give me leave, for a close of this head, to sum up the most that I have said in the Divine Poem of that incomparable sweet Singer of our *Israel*, Mr. George Herbert, in the *Clasping of hands*, pag. 151.

*Lord thou art mine, and I am thine,
 If mine I am; and thine much more,
 Then I or ought, or can be mine,
 Yet to be thine doth me restore;
 So that again I now am mine,
 And with advantage mine the more:
 Since this being mine, brings with it thine,
 And thou with me dost thee restore.
 If I without thee would be mine,
 I neither should be mine nor thine.*

*Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine:
 So mine thou art, that something more
 I may presume thee mine then thine,
 For thou didst suffer to restore
 Not thee, but me, and to be mine:
 And with advantage mine the more,
 Since thou in death wast none of thine,
 Yet thee as mine didst me restore.
 O be mine still, still make me thine;
 Or rather make no Thine and Mine.*

More particularly, I intreat you to en-
 quire into the conditions of the new Cove-
 nant, or the graces and dispositions pro-
 mised therein, and lay your hand on your
 heart, and enquire whether they be really in
 you, such as these.

Jer. 31. 33. 1. I told you saving illumination is one
 great Covenant-condition; hath the Lord
 discovered to you the great and good things
 of his Gospel? opened to you his blessed
 Treasury,

treasury, and annointed your eyes to behold all things in their lively colours; have you got a clear discovery of the nature of sin, duty, misery, mercy, the creatures vanity, Christ's beauty, and excellency? have you with an Eagle-eye pierced into deep Gospel-mysteries? this is not a brain-knowledge consisting in notion, but an experimental spiritual acquaintance with the things of God, weighting the soul with the sense thereof, and leading it into the life and soul of Scripture-truths; so that a Christian now sees Divine things after another manner than ever before, and is led into all truth by the blessed Spirit: God promiseth that *all the Churches Children shall be taught of God*, Isa. 54. 13. which Scripture our Saviour doth cite and interpret, *Job. 6. 45.* of believing or coming to God, *every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Ah Christians, have you learned this choice Gospel-lesson of going out of your selves, and closing with a naked Christ, upon pure Gospel-terms? this is the great lesson of the Gospel, have you learned it? you are dunces, and deserve to be kickt out of Christ's school, unless you have learned this great and sweet lesson; Besides God teacheth many other lessons, as to hate sin, love God, and holiness, and to love God's Children; Hence saith blessed Paul, 1 Thes. 4. 9. *as touching brotherly love; ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are taught of God to love*
one

one another ; this divine nature prompteth
souls to this ; they cannot do otherwise
except they put off their very nature ; for a
Christian may find his heart secretly and
sensibly carryed out to all things and persons
that have the stamp and image of God ; as
the very name and the common nature of a
Brother is potent and prevalent to attract the
affections : the truth is, he hath his Chair
in Heaven that thus teacheth hearts ; and if
God be the teacher, he makes apt and able,
nimble and notable Scholars. Oh Christi-
ans, see and try your learning, enquire who is
your master.

*Cathedram
habet in
Caelis qui
corda docet.
Quando
deus est
ma iſter
q uam cito
do itur,
quod do-
itur. Aug.*

Jer. 31. 33.
Heb. 8. 10.
10. 16.

Rom. 7.12,
16.

2. Another disposition like this, or indeed a fruit of the former is, God's writing his Law in our hearts, *he promisseth to put his Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; so that as Talley answers to Talley, Indenture to Indenture, Face to Face, so the heart shall eccho and answer to the Word of God; and feel something within his own bosome, that joynes issue with the word without; so that a gracious soul can now say with *Paul*, I consent to the Law that it is good; whatever I be, the commandment is holy, just, and good, a carnal heart riseth up in Rebellion against the word, and secretly loaths a spiritual command and could wish it even razed out of the Bible, that it might sin more freely, but a gracious soul loves that word best, that restrains corruption most, and binds it closest in new obedience; hence saith *David*, *thy word is very pure,*

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pure, therefore thy servant loves it, Psal. 119. 140. the stricter the Word is, the better I love it; I would have the Law of God restrain the exorbitancies of my heart and life, it doth me good to be kept in, for I have a wild and wayward heart : Oh how glad am I of a word that searcheth, curbeth, and cutteth off my extravagant branches, I willingly fall under it and bless God for it, as one of the greatest mercies of my life : can you say thus ? when there is a controversie betwixt a pinching word and a repining lust, whether do you vote for ? which do you give your voice for, and plead on the behalf of ? can you not take God's part, and the words part against a naughty deceitful heart ? or do you pick quarrels with the statutes of Heaven when you should obey it ? Ah sirs, try your selves in this, and if you find that you have a counterpane of Gods Word within you, a transcript of this blessed Copy in your hearts, then are you within the Covenant.

3. God promiseth to give his people in Covenant with him, *one heart and one way*, Jer. 32. 39. this imports both an oneness of heart within it self, and also an oneness of heart with other Saints ; before Conversion the heart was divided and distracted betwixt various objects ; God must have part, Satan part, sin part, and the world another part of the heart ; but now the soul gives it self wholly to God, as I have opened, hence David prays, *unite my heart to fear thy name*, Psal 86. 11.

or

*Præsta ei
cor tuum
molle et a-
stabile et
custodi figu-
ram quæ te
figuravit
Artifex,
habeas in
semetipso
humorem, ne
indignatus—
amittas
vestigia di-
gitorum
esús. Irenæ
advers.
Hær. lib. 4.
prop. fin.*

- or make my heart one ; a real Saint is fully intirely, universally given up to God ; but of this before ; likewise the Covenant of Grace makes Christians unanimous ; hence it is that as soon as souls have given up themselves to God, they essay to joyn themselves to their fraternity, and unite with the Society of sincere believers ; hence the primitive Saints *were together with one accord* ; yea they were *of one heart, and of one soul* ; as the Curtains of the Tabernacle were coupled with loops, so were Christians with love ; hence you hear so often mention made of fellowship in the Gospel, and Gods Children are compared to a building fitly framed together, by the cement of the Spirit ; yea to members of the body, with relation to the head, from whom (*i.e.* Christ) the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted — *Ephes.* 4. 16. Well then, sirs, are you united and become one with the rest of the Saints, though you cannot attain to a oneness in judgement in every lesser truth about Discipline, &c. yet are you one with them in heart and affection ? Yea of one judgement and way with them, in main material points of doctrine and practice, having *one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*, cannot you say to others *come, let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, that shall not be forgotten* ? are not your hearts glad when you see any come in, and Worship the Lord ? how stand your hearts
- Act. 9. 26.
Act. 2. 46.
esp. 4. 32.
Phil. 1. 5.
Eph. 2. 21.
Col. 2. 19.
Eph. 4. 3.
4. 5.
Jer. 50. 4, 5.

hearts affected towards such as fear God? are you of one heart with them, can you cheerfully walk in one way with them as your sweetest companions? is your chief content in these truly excellent ones? then you are in Covenant.

4. The fear of God, is a gracious disposition promised to new-covenant Converts, Jer. 32. 40, *I will, saith God, put my fear* Job 28:28. *in their hearts that they shall not depart from me*; this fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom; and 'tis often put for all Religion; it is a holy reverential awefulness wrought in a believers heart, whereby through a serious sense of Gods glorious Majesty and tender mercy the soul is afraid to offend God, and careful to please him as a Child is his Father, by a conscientious obedience to all Gods commands. I cannot stand to open this fully, but bring you to the test; Christians, doth the fear of God possess and seize upon your spirits? doth it make you *men of truth, bating covetousness*? doth Exod. 18. 21. it engage your souls to serve him *with reverence and godly fear*? doth it make you Heb. 12. 28. afraid of his threatnings, fearful to offend Prov. 3. 7. him, careful to please him? do you worship Psal. 5. 7. him *in his fear*? doth it make you run to Prov. 14. 26. him *as your hope and confidence*? are your souls in the fear of the Lord *all the day long*? Prov. 23. 17. doth the fear of God cast out the slavish fear Mat. 10. 28. of men? doth it make you work out your Phil. 2. 12. salvation with fear and trembling? doth it Isa. 66. 2. make you tremble at his word, and willing Isa. 50. 11.

to

Rom. 11.

20.

Rev. 14.7.

Act 10.35.

Prov. 14.

16.

to obey the voice of his servants ? doth it keep you humble, self-denying, from being proud high-minded ? do you fear God and give glory to him in seeing his works : in a word do you fear God and work righteousness, fear God and hate wickedness : is it thus with your souls ? lay your hand upon your heart, and seriously answer these questions ; I know you'll all say you have the fear of God ; but whether hath it these Prophecies ? and one word more, whence springs this fear of God ? doth it flow not only from the apprehension of God's Majesty and strict justice, but from the sense of his free-grace and goodness ; so God saith in Hos. 3. 5. *they shall fear the Lord, and his goodness ;* so saith David, Psal. 130. 4. *there is mercy with thee that thou maist be feared ;* Oh this is kindly, when the sense of Gods love awes the soul to obedience, and works upon it tenderness of Conscience, that it can say, I dare not grieve so good a God, or offend so loving a Father, who never did me hurt, who is always doing me good, shall I render evil for good ? God forbid : this is Child-like and ingenuous, and doth demonstrate a Covenant-relation.

5. Sanctification is another Covenant-promise, Ezek. 36. 25. *then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you :* this is a sweet disposition, what can you say to it ? not that the soul in this life can be free from the remain-

ders

ders of corruption ; for *what is man that*
he should be clean? but the power, strength Job 15. 14.
 and Dominion of sin is crushed in a Co-
 venanted soul ; so that it may be truly said
 of the Regenerate, that he hath *a clean heart,*
and clean hands ; and Christ saith his Disci- Psal. 24. 4.
 ples were clean, all, except Judas ; Well then, Joh. 13. 10.
 hath the good Word of God made you holy,
 and cleansed your hearts ? do you desire to Joh. 15. 3.
 make clean *the inside of the Cup,* as well as
out-side ? I mean do you cleanse your selves
 from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, resolv-
 ing to *perfect holiness in the fear of God ?* are 2 Cor. 7. 1.
 you growing stronger and stronger ? he that Job 17. 9.
 hath clean hands doth renew his strength :
 are you washed from your idols, i. e. the sin
 to which you are most addicted ? and keep Psal. 18. 23.
 your selves from your own iniquity ? can
 you say you hate every false way ? can you
 cut off a right-hand sin, pluck out a right-
 eye sin, though never so dear and useful,
 pleasant and profitable : do you resist and
 conquer (in some measure) your master-
 lusts ? so that you can say, through grace, sin Rom. 6. 14.
 hath not Dominion over you, though you
 feel to your cost it hath possession in you :
 can you say you are prepared for duties and
 ordinances, though you be not cleansed ac- 2 Chron.
 cording to the purification of the sanctuary ? 30. 19—
 doth faith in God's promises purifie your Act. 15. 9.
 hearts ? do you cleanse your ways by ob- Psal. 119. 9.
 serving Scripture-precepts ? do you pray Psal. 51. 10.
 hard, for a clean heart as well as clear state ?
 Oh sirs, try your selves in these things, unless
 you

you be sanctified you are not justified, many are undone through self-deceit, in this case, *Solomon* saith, there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet is not cleansed from their filthiness, *Prov.* 30. 12. take heed of this, and labour to evidence your justification by your sanctification

6. Another gracious effect of the New Covenant is, *A new heart, and a new spirit*, *Ezek.* 36. 26. this is an holy disposition, an habit of grace, the image of God, the Divine nature strangely changing, altering, metamorphosing the soul, casting it into a new mold, and turning the stream and current of the souls motions and affections into another channel, to a compliance with God's will, and a tendency towards Heaven, and the things of Heaven: this is a wonderful act and fruit of God's *free-grace*, and *sanctifying spirit*: and oh what a change doth it produce in the heart and life! not only a mental change to have the mind adorned with some general truths in a notional way; so that whereas before a man was an ignorant Sot, now he is grown a knowing person, and learned discourser or disputant; nor yet is it only a moral change, whereby a man formerly a notorious offender is grown an exact *Civilian*; nor yet a formal change by which a careless neglecter is become a constant performer of religious duties, which is good so far, yet no more than an hypocrite may do; *Simon Magus* believes, *Herod* doth many things, *Ahab* fasts, *Judas* can Pray
and

and Preach. But the new creature goes beyond them all, for 'tis a Cordial, Spiritual, Evangelical change of the whole man, to what is good; so that now the soul hath new motions, actions, conversation, a new rule, a new principle, a new end, new affections, new loves and delights, a new light and life, new heat and strength, new companions and acquiescence, new griefs, fears, burdens, back, hopes, hatred, desires, and expectations, *old things are past away, and behold, all things are become new*; so that it may well be called a new Creation, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Christians, try your selves in this, what work of God hath passed upon your souls? have you a new heart? are you made holy as God is holy? doth this new heart hate and expel sin? doth it close with real Saints as Saints? doth it breathe after Grace in the souls of relations, neighbours? doth it make you sensible of the smileings and hidings of God's face? doth it raise your hearts to heavenly objects and delights? doth Grace in some measure grow, thrive, increase and come on in your souls? do you Worship God in a spiritual manner, and long for Communion with him here, and in Heaven?

7. A soft heart is promised in the new Covenant, Ezek. 36. 26. *I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh*, i. e. a soft, broken and tender heart, a flexible, pliant, and melting disposition; not so much the eyes pouring

floods of tears (for that may proceed from a natural constitution) but a soul grieved for sin, as offence against God, which lyes in the sinners account and estimation, looking upon it as the greatest evil, and worse than the worst affliction; and if it were to do again, he would rather be torn to pieces, than willingly commit such a sin, he would give all the World, (if in his power) that it were undone again; and therefore is it that the Scripture rather expresseth it by mourning than by weeping; for weeping is rather a passionate act of the outward senses and irascible faculties, (though 'tis desirable to give vent to inward sorrow by outward tears) but mourning is an heart contrition and hearty compunction for sin, as dishonouring God, grieving his Spirit, Crucifying his Son, and violating his holy and righteous Law: well then, have you soft and tender hearts? i. e. can you lay to heart your sins as the greatest evils that ever befall you? can you justify God if he should condemn you; can you condemn your selves, as worthy to be damned in Hell for ever? do you loath your selves for all your abominations? can you wish you had been upon the rack when you committed such sins? are you weary and heavy laden with the intolerable burden of the guilt of sin? and what would you give or leave to have it taken off? is your heart sensible of the absolute need you have of Jesus Christ? are you soft and pliable to Gods holy will, attentive to Divine motions,

motions, retentive of Divine impressions? doth the least hint of God's mind find in you an observant spirit? when God saith, *seek my face*, doth your heart readily eccho, *my face Lord will I seek*? do your souls tremble under sense of threatnings and judgements? do the apprehensions of Gods loving-kindness melt and attract your heart? doth this strongly lead and draw you to repentance? ask your own souls such questions as these, whereby you may know whether you have this condition and disposition of the Gospel-Covenant.

8. The last disposition that is promised in the New Covenant, as a singular mercy, is holy practice, spiritual obedience, so Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements and do them*—— this is an holy, watchful, chearful, faithful, fruitful obedience to Divine precepts and commands: so then let me pose you thus, do you run the ways of Gods commandments, with enlarged hearts; do you follow God fully, and walk with God uprightly? do you delight to do Gods will, and in all things mind your rule? doth the mind of God move you more than the customs and traditions of men? though you cannot say you do exactly keep, yet cannot you say you have respect to all Gods commandments? are you like the Centurion's servants ready to go or come at Gods bidding? doth the Authority of a divine command

Si ergo talis fuerit vita nostra, vita omnibus membris quadrata & composta ut universi motus nostri secundum Dei? Leges agantur de eodem testamentum Dei erit super carnem nostram.
Orig.
Hom. 3.
in cap. 17.
gen.

mand more awe your conscience to obedience, than the examples of most or best of men? do you with *Zechariah* and *Elizabeth* walk in all the ways of Gods commandments blameless? do you take heed to your ways that you offend not with tongue or hand or foot? do you worship God in the beauty of holiness? do you make it your business to ingage your hearts it your approaches to God? do you lift up your hearts in Gods ways, that God and you may meet? do you worship God in the spirit, rejoyce in Christ Jesus, not having any confidence in the flesh? in a word, do you gladly follow Christs example, study conformity to him, and communion with him? is faith working by love? and doth that love ingage you to keep Gods commands, and render them not grievous but pleasant? do you account Christs yoke easie, his burden light, and his service perfect freedom? and are you constant and permanent in holy walking all your days? and though you may stumble and fall, or turn aside, or stand still, or turn back, yet you dare not quit and forsake Gods ways or chuse the ways of sin, to go aside with the workers of iniquity, but you lament your miscarriages, are restless till you get into Gods ways again, plead hard for pardon, are more jealous over your hearts, make more haste Godwards, and so through grace, keep faithful to death that you may receive a Crown of life.

Thus

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Thus I have gleaned up the conditions or dispositions of Gods Children which are promised by God, purchased by Christ, and effectually wrought by the blessed spirit in the hearts of the elect, and these are the mercies of the Covenant, by which you may try whether you be interested in the Covenant ; for if you find these new-Covenant-mercies in you, you may conclude you have an interest in new Covenant-priviledges.

Another way of tryal (which I shall but briefly hint at) is to discover the properties and effects of new Covenant-mercies, upon the souls of such as partake of them ; i. e. those benefits and priviledges of the Covenant, as Reconciliation, Adoption, Remission of sin, imputation of Christs Righteousness, and the rest before-mentioned leave gracious effects upon the hearts of such, as partake thereof — Take a taste ;

1. They are transforming conforming mercies, they change heart and life, as before ; yea, and they make the soul argue from mercy to duty ; that soul that partakes of these mercies, dare not sin, that Grace may abound, nor argue from mercy to sinful liberty, much less make Christian liberty a cloak of lasciviousness ; oh no, that's the devils Logick, a Child of God thinks and thus reasons, did Christ dye for me, and shall not I dye unto sin, and live unto him that dyed for me ? shall my dear Saviour shed his blood for me ; and shall I think

any thing too dear for him ? shall he forgive much to me, and shall not I give all I have to him ? shall not I love him much ? pray much, obey much ? O my soul, how canst thou chuse but live in new obedience ? doth not the love of Christ constrain thee ? hath he reconciled thee to God, and God to thee ; and wilt not thou be reconciled to thy offending brother ? hath he forgiven thee ten thousand Talents, *gratis*, and wilt not thou forgive such as offend thee a few farthings for Christs sake ? hath God given thee himself and dost thou withhold any part of thy poor, silly, sorry self from him ? nay here I am, let him work in me, and do with me as seems good in his eyes.

2. They are chearing, comforting, and refreshing mercies ; these mercies of the Covenant will answer all objections, clear all scores, and put the soul out of doubt concerning its state. Let the Devil and an unbelieving heart conspire together to torment the Conscience, yet one word of the blessed Covenant will baffle all their arguings, and stop their mouths, and still the soul ; let God speak out and say, I am thy God in Covenant, who then can cause trouble ? this was all *Dauids* Salvation, Desire, and Consolation. One drop of this holy Oyle of the Covenant will sweeten a whole Fountain and Sea of the bitter Waters of the sharpest afflictions ; a taste of the Covenant will turn Water into Wine ; this is the

Is. 33. 24. Tree cast into the bitter Waters of *Marah*,
that

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that makes them sweet ; sense of pardon takes away the sense of the pain : if a particular promise can so comfort a soul, as it may be called a cordial. Oh what comfort will the Covenant afford ? which is a cluster and constellation of Evangelical promises, the good things of the new Covenant keep head above Water, and heart above terrour in all conditions : these steel the soul with courage in difficulties, comfort in Adversity, and an Antidote in prosperity.

3. These mercies of the Covenant are raising, reviving, elevating mercies, they lift the heart above the World, and advance it to Divine Cœlestial objects and Conceptions ; a Christian thus cloathed with the Sun, hath the Moon under his feet, and all Sublunary enjoyments at his heels ; Christ and things above lye next his heart ; other things are dross and dung in comparison thereof ; a Covenanted Christians Treasure is in Heaven, and his heart is there ; he prefers a grain of Grace to all the comforts of the World ; common mercies will not content his heart, or quiet his Conscience ; he opens his Heaven-born soul to Heavenly influences ; he can easily wink all the bravery of this lower World into blackness and deformity, and pitty the sottish senseless sons of men that take up their rest below, and neglect the main concerns of Eternity. Ah, thinks the gracious soul, what fools are these that chase these gilded vanities,

Rev. 12. 1.
Col. 3. 1.
Phil. 3. 8, 9.

vanities, and pant after the dust of the Earth? would to God they did but see with these enlightened eyes that Gods spirit hath helpt me to. Oh that they did but taste the sweetness of that Grace that my soul is enamoured with, they would thirst after the World no more, but long for God, yea this living, loving God, and never be content till they come to appear before God. How blessed are they that have their sins pardoned, hearts purged, souls reconciled? that have God for their portion, and Heaven for their inheritance and eternal mansion?

4. The mercies of the Covenant are enlarging and encreasing mercies; the Christian that hath them is like the house of David, that grows stronger and stronger; these are tending to perfection, and make the soul strive and thrive in holiness; going from step to step, from strength to strength, pressing towards the mark, rising as the Sun unto Noon-day, or as the water to the spring; yea, *this water shall still be springing up to eternal life*, Joh. 4. 14. Grace makes the soul long after means of growth, and so increase with all increase of God, till it be a perfect man in Christ; the soul is insatiable and never saith it hath enough, till it have arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Ephes. 4. 13. yea, till it have attained to the resurrection of the dead, Phil. 3. 11. Oh sirs, examine your hearts herein, how do you come on and increase

in Religion? do you grow in grace, in knowledge, faith, love, humility, repentance, self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness? where's your proficiency? have you found grace like a grain of Mustard-seed? have these mercies ripened into the blade and full ear of deliberate and proportionable fruit-bearing? a right Christian will never say he is good enough while he sojourns in this lower Region, nor yet happy enough till he be with God in Heaven.

Thus much for the third Use, which was an Use of Examination.

CHAP. IX.

IV. **T**HE fourth Use is of Conviction, Redargation and Reprehension, and this falls heavy on the heads, 1. Of Sinners. 2. Of Saints.

1. If the mercies of the Covenant be sure mercies (as we have cleared fully) Oh what folly are those souls guilty of that are Christless, graceless, careless souls, that have no interest in these mercies, and never trouble themselves about ensuring these Covenant-mercies to their own souls; how many in the World are destitute of these mercies? there is a Generation of Men and Women that live within the pale of the visible Church, that may be called *Lo-Rubamah*, for they have not yet obtained mercy; nay, in the state they are in, there is no mercy for them, because they are not yet in Christ, through whom these Covenant-mercies flow: unconverted souls are unconcerned persons in these mercies; these dogs have nothing to do with this Childrens Bread; and yet who so apt to catch and snatch these precious dainties? they love to hear the glorious privileges of believers laid open, as Justification, Reconciliation, Adoption, and eternal life; and yet we must sadly say they have nothing to do with these: if they hear Discourses of Gods mercy, how are they pleased, tickled, and even ravished? and they make no
question

question but they shall be saved, as well as others; and they think surely God that made them will not damn them, but ask these poor souls whether they be savingly converted, renewed, ingrafted into Christ by faith? alas they know not what this means; they never asked their own souls the question; nay, they are ready to think that is a very needless enquiry, or impossible to know; however this never lay upon their Hearts and Consciences, as necessary in order to clearing up this great case, whether they have obtained mercy: But let all ignorant fots know that *he that made them will not have mercy on them*, Isa. 27. 11. let all prophane Rebels against the King of Heaven know that *God will not be merciful to any wicked Transgressor*, Psal. 59. 5. Gods Attributes are all Analogal and Correspondent; he will not cease to be just and holy that he may be merciful, he will be merciful in his own way; Mercy and Covenant shall go hand in hand; 'tis a ridiculous folly for men to conceit, they shall have the Mercies of the Covenant that are not within the Covenant; this is that fallacy that *Logicians* call (*fallacia dividendi conjungenda*) of dividing things to be conjoyned; 'tis most dangerous and damnable in Divinity, when souls dream of having peace without grace, happiness without holiness; but let men know there's no mercy but in the Covenant, where no ark of the Covenant no seat of mercy, where there's no work of Grace, there's no Covenant

nant of Grace ; where Christ is a Saviour
 Aa. 5. 31. he will be a Sovereign, where he gives remis-
 Aa. 3. 26. sion of sins he will give repentance ; his way
 of blessing is a turning persons from their
 iniquities ; God will not shew mercy to any
 but in his own way ; such must obtain
 mercy in converting Grace, as obtain mercy
 in the enjoyment of pardoning Grace ; san-
 ctification goeth along with Justification ;
 1 Tim. 1. Paul obtained mercy by forsaking his own
 13. old courses ; God saveth us according to
 his mercy : how ? why *by the washing of
 Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,*
 Titus 3. 5. they are saved from sin, that
 are saved from wrath and Hell : 'tis a self-
 deceiving soul-damning contradiction to
 dream of pardoning, without purging
 grace ; thousands in the World fancy a God
 to themselves made up all of mercy, and
 let them do what they please, they can
 bolster up themselves with this conceit,
 God is merciful ; and so (as God himself
 saith) Psal. 50. 21. *these things hast thou
 done and I kept silence, thou thoughtst that
 I was altogether such a one as thy self, but
 I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order
 before thee, q. d. think not to make me a
 Patron of thy wickedness ; 'tis true I spare
 thee and suffer thee to live quietly, but for-
 bearance is no acquittance ; think not I love
 thee because I afford thee outward mercies,
 which thou abusest to licentiousness, but I
 am resolved to take vengeance on thee ; I
 have justice, as well as mercy, and I have a
 season*

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season wherein I shall pour out the Vials of my wrath upon Vessels of wrath that are fitted to destruction ; a time is coming when I shall tear you in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver. Oh sirs, the condition of graceless unconverted souls is sad ; for,

1. They are under a sure and sad sentence of condemnation ; for as the mercies of the new Covenant are sure to believers, so the curses of the old Covenant are as sure to all Unbelievers ; as the second *Adam* conveys certain life ; so the first *Adam* conveys certain death to his seed : as *he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life* ; so *he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*, Joh. 3. 36. as *he that believeth is acquitted*, so *he that believeth not is condemned already*, ver. 18. all his other sins are bound upon him by this of unbelief ; this is the condemnation ; it is as impossible that the Devils in Hell shall be saved as that Unconverted sinners (while such) shall be saved ; for Christ saith again and again, *except ye be Converted, except a man be born again, he cannot see, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, and binds it with strong asseverations, and dare any question the verity of Gods positions or comminations, that pretends to believe his promise : yea, God hath bound him by oath in this case as well as in the other, *Heb. 3. 11.* it's spoken there concerning the rebellious murmuring *Israelites* ; I swear in my wrath, saith God, they shall not enter into

Mat. 18.

Joh. 3. 35.

into my rest; or if they shall enter, then *q. d.* never trust me more; nay, let not me be God; but what's this to us? Yes, the Apostle applies it to unbelievers in Gospel times, *Cap. 4.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. hence he repeats the Oath again referring to unbelieving Gospellers; that they shall never enter into the Heavenly *Canaan*: and surely unconverted sinners are in a woful plight, of whom it may be truly said, that God himself cannot save them while they continue in that state; for there's no way but one of entring Heaven that's Jesus Christ;

Act. 4. 12. and how can they escape that neglect so
Heb. 2. 3. great salvation? there's no other way revealed, and do we think God will forsake his ordinary Road, and quit this glorious design, to gratifie a Generation of wilful neglecters and rejecters of this blessed contrivance of saving sinners by interest in Jesus Christ? it cannot be, you must either go to Heaven this way, or down to Hell by your own way.

2. Their souls are not sure to be another moment out of Hell-torments; poor graceless sinners cannot secure themselves upon any real Scripture-grounds, that they shall enjoy that bastard peace of Conscience, in which they flatter themselves another hour; for ought they know, their case may be like *Belshazzar's*, *Dan. 5. 5.* while they are Drinking, Carousing, Ranting, Revelling, some dreadful Hand-writing or Testimony of Gods Indignation may break forth
 against

against them which may marr all their
 mirth, appal their spirits, trouble their
 thoughts, loose the joynts of their Loyns,
 and make their knees smite one against
 another. Oh what terrour and horroure
 will the dreadful summons of death strike
 into them? how will these fool-hardy
 Warriors, against an infinite God, call to
 the Rocks and Mountains to cover them?
 Oh what a sudden change, what a sad
 Catastrophe will the cold hand of death
 make with them? what a fall will
 these secure and senseless sinners have from
 the height of worldly preferment to the
 depth of eternal torments? stand a little
 and look at that rich and wretched miser
 in the Gospel, that had no room for his
 fruits and goods, that sung a *requiem* to his
 soul for many years; Yet alas, had not one
 night to take his ease in; *thou fool*, saith See Luk.
 God, *this night shall thy soul be required* 12. 17. 18.
of thee, or do they require thy soul, i.e. the 19. 20.
 Devils who are waiting for a commission
 from God to catch hold of graceless souls
 to hale them to torments as soon as they
 have forsaken their wretched bodies; so
 some interpret it; however the rich man's
 soul was suddenly snatcht from a full Table
 and dainty Fare into eternal misery, with-
 out drop of Water or hopes of mercy; for
 let him tear his heart with bitter out-cries;
Father Abraham, have mercy on me, neither
 his Father *Abraham*, nor the God of *Abra-*
ham shall have any mercy for him; former
 offers

See Luk.
 16. 24, 25
 26.

offers of mercy are now turned into flames of fury ; they have wilfully forsaken their own mercy, and now are wofully forsaken by the God of mercy. O consider this you that are yet in your sins, dancing about the pit, and are ready every instant to drop into eternal woe.

3. Their certain mistake will aggravate their woful state. Oh what a dreadful disappointment will this be, for persons that lived demurely in the World, and passed for very civil neighbours ; yea, for choice Saints, yet now to be set on the left hand amongst the Goats at the great day ; yea, persons that thought themselves they were in the ready Road to Heaven ; and as they are (as they imagine) stepping into glory to miss their footing, and fall into Eternal Torments ; 'tis a dreadful sight to see soul and hopes giving up the Ghost together, and swept away as the Spiders Web into the fire of Hell. Oh for a soul that hath all his days been building Castles in the Aire, the House of his fair profession upon the sliding sand of Fancy and Imagination, to have all come tottering down with one puff of death, will be a dreadful sight. Ministers told them of this, but they would not believe, nor suspect their state, or spend one hour in searching whether they were right or no ; many a time were they warned of the danger : but they pleased themselves in wilful self-delusion ; and now they are past recovery : they would not be brought

Job 11. 20.
c. 8. 14.

to

to an holy despair in themselves, that they might have sure footing in these sure mercies; and now they shall and must despair of ever having part or portion in these sweet and certain mercies: they would not be beaten from their carnal shifts and senseless Pleas, and now they must and shall be forever banisht from them; and feel the bitterness of them: Ministers could not deal with them, but God can; and it will be an heart-confounding day, when the varnish shall be washed off, and all rotten props shall be pluckt up, that kept the soul from horror, and they shall see themselves deceived by Satan, the World, and their own self-flattering hearts into eternal misery.

4. But once more, many things in and about these sure mercies, will augment their eternal misery. Alas, sirs, here there's no speaking to wicked men, they will not abide a sober Treaty about their souls, they have not leisure or patience to yield an obedient Ear to Discourses about these sure mercies, but a time is coming wherein they shall be forced to think of these lost mercies to their cost; now they have other things to mind, the world doth so fill their ears and hearts, that they thrust these things from them, and judge themselves unworthy of them: they are just like *Jeremiah's* wild Ass used to the Wilderness, *that snuffeth up* Jer. 2. 24. *the wind at her pleasure, in her occasion who can turn her away? — but in her month they shall find her.* So there's no dealing

L with

with wicked men in their jollity and frolick fits, but their month of sorrow is approaching either here or hereafter ; and oh the bitter pangs and travels that shall then possess them? in this World they would not consider, but hereafter they shall have an Eternity to consider of these Covenant-mercies, though in a hopeless way : as 1. They shall think of the nature of these mercies they have lost. Oh how free, how sweet, how suitable, how satisfying were they? how sure would God have made them to them? and the better these mercies, the bitterer their sorrow in the loss of them. 2. They shall think that once they might have enjoyed them, and have been happy in that enjoyment ; once they had a day of grace, means of grace, ministers perswaded, spirit moved, mercies, afflictions; word, rod, every thing spoke this language. Oh embrace these mercies, but I refused; and now they are out of my reach. 3. They shall think, and think again, how near they were to the embracing of these mercies; Oh what convictions did God fasten on my heart by such and such a Sermon ! I was once half-perswaded to embrace them, how near was I to a full closure? I went home with strong resolutions to be another man; but this deceitful heart beguiled me, and so I put off repentance till now it be too late. 4. They shall think what these mercies would have done for them; these mercies would have infolded their souls in the arms

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of Gods love ; these would have filled their souls with Grace, fitted them for Gods use, and furnished them for glory, these mercies would have rendred them profitable in life, comfortable in death, and happy for ever ; the possessours of these mercies are gracious Saints ; Yet again, 5. They shall think with sadness what they have exchanged these mercies for ; they have passed off these sweet and sure mercies for trash and trifles, for dung and dirt, for a little stinking pleasure or stinging profit, which now they have left behind them in the World, and only carry the guilt and shame along with them, which must abide them, when sensual delights are vanisht away. Oh what gnashing of teeth and indignation at themselves will this be-
get for their former madness ? 6. They must think how many thousands of souls were made happy by a gracious closure with and full enjoyment of these mercies ; persons whom they despised in the World, and thought not worthy to come in their company, shall sit down with the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles in Heaven ; but these wretched souls are thrust out. Oh, will a damned wretch think, I might have been happy as well as yonder shining Saint ; he was a suffering Creature, I was a rejoycing miscreant ; now he is comforted, and I am tormented. Yet, once more, 7. The damned in Hell shall bethink themselves who was in the fault, and whence it comes to pass that these mercies were not made sure

to their souls ; and they can charge none herewith but themselves : they will then see that none was to be blamed but their own wilful wills, whatever they may object here, and boast that they are willing, yet God lays the blame there, and so shall they, will they, nill they, they must be speechless, and only charge themselves as making faggots to burn them in for ever. Oh, will the soul think, I may thank my self for this ; I wilfully forsook my own mercies by observing lying vanities ; this is the fruit of mine own doings, I would needs be damned ; Ministers and Godly friends perswaded, God stopt my way by his Providences, Ordinances, but I would run into the pit, and here I am shut up in eternal darkness ; wo be to me, that ever I was born. Oh that I had either never heard of or embraced those mercies, that I have rejected, and that will follow my soul with horror for ever.

Ah sirs, I beseech you consider, such a day will come, and then you'l remember these things, and they will lye heavy upon you, then you'l feel what an evil and bitter thing it is that you have forsaken God : then you'l vomit up your sweet morsels, and remember these sweet words that here you despised ; then you'l remember the possibility and probability you were once in, of obtaining these sweet mercies ; now they are attainable , but if once you have set a step upon the shore of Eternity, You are past hopes and remedy, for the dead and damned

damned do only hear the sound of wisdom Job 28.22. with their ears, but are never likely to enjoy the benefit thereof. Oh put not off these things with some slight and transient thoughts; but shame your selves to an holy diligence.

2. Another sort to be reprov'd, are Gods own children that are guilty of four foule faults: 1. They are apt to indent. 2. Compound about these mercies. 3. They do not live upon: Or 4. Not up to these mercies.

1. Gods Children would have the mercies of the Covenant; but then they have a mind to indent with God to be secured from the crosses attending these mercies; the flesh shrinks and is loath to suffer; we are like *Orpah*, we would follow Christ a little way, but fain would we make our bargain so, as not to follow him in foul way: But sirs, consider would you have the sweets and not the bitter of Godliness? did you not take Christ (in a marriage-covenant) for better and worse? will you pick and chuse with him? do not right virgin-souls follow the Lamb whither-soever he goeth? Ah sirs, this Covenant-relation is an expresse, voluntary, universal, unreserved self-resignation: the bearing of the Cross was always supposed Mat. 10. and implied; and if you will not have him 37: 38. with it, you are to be without it; for the *Mark 10.* Cross is [*Evangelii genius*] the very inseparable property, complexion, and companion of the Gospel: and Christ would not have 30.

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Luk. 14. 28. any cheated with imaginary hopes of immu-
nity from sufferings, but tells them the worst,
and bids them sit down and count the cost;
and if you did not so at first, you are not yet
sincere, and if you did, and still would have
Christ; why do you now grumble at bear-
ing of that which you freely chose. Besides,
know it, Crosses for Christ are special Go-
spel-mercies, for afflictions are adopted to
be real mercies of the Covenant, and there-
fore they are promised as well as any other
mercies, in *Psal. 89. 31, 32.* and *David*
Psal. 119. ownes afflictions as an act and fruit of Co-
^{75.}venant-faithfulness, because it fetcheth him
ver. 67-71. from his wandrings, instructs him in Gods
statutes, and therefore was good for him.
Crosses for Christ never did any hurt, but
have been usually means of good, many Chri-
stians have blessed God for them; God sees
we cannot live or like well without them;
Paul gloried in the Cross of Christ, took
pleasure in distresses for Christ, and why
then are we afraid of them, or would indent
to be secured from them: be ashamed of
your nice and delicate spirits.

In closing 2. Some Christians are too too apt to com-
with offers pound with God about these Covenant-mer-
of Grace, cies; my meaning is, they do not look and
we must be make out for the whole chain, composition
uniform: and combination (as I may say) of Covenant-
earthly things God
things God is pleased to retail: all have some, none have all: but in the Hea-
venly Treasure, he will not break the whole piece, and cut it into
Remnants; if God would cut off as much as would serve mens
turn, he should have customers enough. *Mr. Gurnal Christ. a-*
mout ——— *pag. 310.* mercies

mercies, they are willing and content to be put off with some, and do not sue for all: they can apply some promises, not others; see a necessity of pardoning-mercy, but do not plead and act-faith for purging, softening, quickning, enlightning mercies of the Covenant. Consider, Christians, by this doing, 1. You prejudice your selves, you need all these Covenant-mercies; there's not one of the fore-mentioned mercies, that a Christian can live and thrive without; all are of great use, every one hath its peculiar excellency, a gracious soul cannot spare any of them; nay, 'tis a sin for it to be content with less than God hath promised; he that's not for all, is truly for none at all: the true owner will not divide: in one part of your life or other, you'l want all Covenant-mercies; it's base unworthiness and ingratitude to slight any of them. 2. You dishonour God, and disparage these mercies, as if God were not able to give you all, and pay the whole debt of his free and full promise; as for example, suppose a rich Tradesman owe you a sum of money, and you come to him and tell you are willing to abate him so much, and compound with him, and take of him a shilling in the pound, or a pound in the hundred for the whole debt, he looks upon himself as disparaged, being a sufficient Chapman, he will not have his ability or honesty questioned; but quickly answers, what do you think I am breaking? I will not be abated any thing, here's your money,

i^{le} pay you all : so God would not be compounded with ; he looks upon it as a dishonour to his free-grace and faithfulness, and bids the soul open its mouth wide, and promiseth to fill it, *Psal.* 81. 10. i.e. ask great things, many things, spare not, ask what thou needest, ask what I have promised, I am neither scant nor faint in giving, stint not thy self in asking, I shall not send thee away empty ; they that come for most, speed best ; and when thou hast gone to the utmost extent of thy reach in asking, *I can, and will give thee abundantly more than thou art able to ask or think*, *Ephes.* 3. 20. Oh Christians, chide your selves for your sinful mannerliness and modesty ; and widen your contracted spirits for larger in-comes of Grace and Mercy. Remember, these Covenant-supplies are all of mercy, not deserved, and they are mercies in the plural, containing large and liberal revenues to be communicated to indigent wanting souls.

3. God's Children do not live upon these mercies of the Covenant ; we blame them that have good estates, and live besides them ; and well we may, for it's a base and a beggarly practice, when persons have enough, but want power to eat, take their portion, and enjoy the good of all they have ; this is a sore evil, and a sad curse, and the contrary is good, comely, a sweet blessing, and the very gift of God : and Oh what a sad evil for the Saints of God, heirs of Promise to live off their Estates, none
so

So rich as real Saints, they are heirs to a very vast inheritance ; God himself is *their portion* ; yea, *the portion of their inheritance, and of their cup, he maintains their lot* ; they have enough, and they cannot lose what they have. Oh at what high rates should such rich heirs live ? and what an unworthy degenerate spirit doth it import to live so beggarly as most of us do ? As, 1. To live so much by sense, and so little by faith ; it is the Gospel-character of believers, to live by their faith ; walk by faith and not by sense, or sight, to see him that's invisible, to venture their all upon unseen grounds : and Oh what a noble and generous, what a brave and blessed life is the life of faith ! and on the contrary, what a sorry and fordid, what a beggarly and niggardly life is a life of sense ! such a soul goes a begging, and craves a crumb of one, a morsel of another to make a meal of, and still the souls Stomach is hungry and craving, and at the best, how quickly are they gone ? alas sirs, objects of sense will not carry you through the World ; sense will sink with *Peter* where it cannot feel a bottom ; 'tis faith only that will lift the head above water, and heart above terrour ; when you must pass through a sea of sorrows in this tumultuous World : Christians, where's your faith ? you are distinguished from others by this precious grace : the want of this undoeth us : hence it is, 2. That Gods Children are so often at a loss, and know not what to do ; no wonder if they
be

Psal. 16. 2

Hab. 2. 3.

Rom. 1. 17

2 Cor. 5. 7.

Heb. 11.

be at their wits end, when they are at their faiths end : many conditions ; yea, any affliction will throw a Saint upon his back when he stands not upon the feet of faith, or leans not upon Christ by faith : this is the reason why in temptation we cry out, God hath cast me off for ever, and he will be favourable no more ; and we give up the Buckler, and yield to Satans assaults and demands, which becomes our enemies sport, and our bane ; yea any little loss or cross dismays us, as though we were undone, or as though (with poor *Jacob*, once) our life were bound up in a Ladd, or Bagg, or such like silly sorry things. Ah, dear sirs, where is your delight in God ? where's your encouraging your selves in God ? where's your rejoycing in the Lord with *Habakkuk* when a Cloud or Curtain hath covered all your worldly enjoyments ? why do you not oppose one God to all the Armys of evils that beset you round ? why do you not take the more content in God, when you have the less of the creature to take content in ? why do you not boast in your God ? and bear up your selves bigg with your hopes in God and expectations from him ? do you not see young heirs to great Estates, act and spend accordingly ? and why shall you, being the King of Heaven's Sons be lean and ragged from day to day, as though you were not worth a Groat ? Oh sirs, live upon your portion, chide your selves for living besides what you have, there are great
and

Psal. 37. 4.

1 Sam. 30.

6.

Hab. 3.

16, 17.

and precious promises, rich enriching mercies, you may make use of God's al-sufficiency; you can blame none but your selves if you be defective or discouraged: a Woman truly Godly for the main, having buried a Child, and sitting alone in sadness, did yet cheer up her heart with this expression, God lives, and having parted with another, still the redoubled, Comforts dye, but God lives, at last her dear Husband dyes, and she late oppressed and almost overwhelmed with sorrow, a little Child she had yet surviving, having observed what before she spoke to comfort her self, comes to her, and saith, *is God dead? Mother, is God dead?* this reacht her heart, and by Gods blessing recovered her former confidence in her God, who is a living God: thus do you chide your selves, ask your fainting spirits under pressing, outward sorrows, is not God alive? and why then doth not thy soul revive? why doth thy heart dye within thee when comforts dye? cannot a living God support thy dying hopes? thus Christians argue down your discouraged and disquieted spirits as *David* did, *Psal. 42. 5.* But so much for that:

4 As Christians do not live upon, so they do not live up to these Sure Mercies of *David*, and that in their Walking, so,

1. Unholily.
2. Unsteadily.
3. Uncomfortably.
4. Unfruitfully.

1. Many

1. Many of Gods Children walk unsuitably, *i. e.* unholily, unspiritually, untenderly, not with that conscientiousness, exactness and closeness they ought to do: if Gods Children lived up to their mercies and privileges: oh how holy should they be, seeing that these things shall be dissolved and seeing we look for such things, nay, seeing we see and feel such things mystically already, even a new Heaven and new, Earth, after a sort, in this new Covenant-dispensation, *what manner of persons ought we to be, and oh how diligent should we be that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless?* 2 Pet. 3. 11—13, 14. But Oh Christians, how short are we, yea how inconsistent are our lives with our liberties! how incongruous are our duties to our mercies! yea, how opposite are our spirits to our comforts! What sirs, Heavenly mercies and carnal hearts, flat duties, earthly conversations! Oh shame your selves before the Lord, blush, tremble to think of your unsuitableness to Covenant-mercies. How far are you below these enjoyments! doth not your unanswerable walking give just ground of suspicion whether you have interest in these, yea or no? what sirs, are you Saints and yet muck-worms, are you partakers of an Heavenly calling, and yet walk so like the men of the World? is it fit to see Eagles in a dirty dunghill, or Heaven-born souls in acts of filthiness? either be better or quit your claim, you dishonour God, and discredit religion more than others. Alas friends,

friends, God will not be beholden to you for the meer title of being Religious unless you be really such : mercies inferr duty and licentiousness is inconsistent with the nature and ends of Covenant-mercies. You grieve Gods Spirit, crosse his designs, wrong your own souls, sadden the hearts of the righteous, and open the mouths of wicked men : you little know what hurt you do by one act of sinning. Consider that as the privileges of the Covenant bespeak holiness ; so the conditions of the Covenant include holiness, and how then came, heirs of promise to be so unlike their Heavenly Father ? what do the Children of light tampering with works of darkness ?

*Qui bonus
est & justus,
& mundus
& immacu-
latus, neq;
malum ali-
quid neq;
injustum
neq; abomi-
nandum in
suo sponse
thalamo
sustinebit.
Iræn. adv.
Heb. lib. 4:*

2. Gods Children walk very unsteadily, i. e. they are off and on, inconstant, have good moods, and motions, but they wear off, and decay, they quickly lose their lively impressions, and are constant in inconstancy, they are zealous and forward for God one while, at other times they are backward and froward. Ah sirs, is this a living up to these Sure mercies of *David* ? these constant, unchangeable invariable mercies ? this Covenant is ordered in all things and sure, and so are the mercies of it ; how comes it to pass then that Covenanters are so often discomposed, disordered and unsettled ? sometimes they are for God, and sometimes not ; they are halting betwixt two opinions, like drunken men, they are leaning sometimes to the right hand, at other times to the left, like

Gen. 49. 4. like Reuben, they are unstable as water, and so
 Hof. 7. 8. shall not excel ; like Ephraim, a Cake half-
 chap. 6. 4. baked, hot and hard on one side, cold and
 doughy on the other : or like the same
 Ephraims goodness like a Morning-cloud,
 or early Dew that tarryes not long, but is
 quickly scattered by the strong storms of
 persecutions, or dryed up by the warm
 beams of prosperity : these unstable Chri-
 stians are like *Jame's* waves of the Sea, like
 Jude 12, *Jude's* wandring Starrs, or flying clouds,
 13. carryed about of Winds ; or like *Paul's*
 Eph. 4. 14. Children, tossed to and fro ; they are like
 Locusts that move to and again ; like Grass-
 hoppers that are still up and down, in vari-
 able motions ; the hearts of such are as a
 Cart-wheel, saith one, and their thoughts as
 a rolling Axle-tree : I know, the best of Gods
 Children are incident to listings up and cast-
 ings down in point of quicknings and in-
 largements, and this may be the effect of
 Gods affording or suspending the influences
 of his grace ; but I speak this of a Christi-
 ans remissness, and his inconstancy through
 neglect and carelesness, and want of stirring
 up in his soul the Graces of Gods spirit, and
 so losing the liveliness his soul feels some-
 times, and afterwards is warmed, melted,
 but returns into folly ; this is the Christians
 round, and how unsuitable is this for a sin-
 cere soul ? these stars are to be fixed in the
 firmament of the Church, and are not to be
 wandring Starrs or Meteors : these Trees of
 the Lords planting should be strongly rooted,
 and

and not like Reeds tossed with every wind ; they should be Pillars in the House of God, and not Feathers or Weather-cocks upon House-tops ; these living stones should not be round and rolling, but square and fixed, still settled upon the Center : if the Testimony of Christ be confirmed in us, we should hold fast our confidence firm unto the end, and pray hard for a more constant spirit, as *David* did, *Psal.* 51. 10. that we may be like *Jachin* and *Boaz*, stability and strength ; for if we be stable, we shall be strong, and so answerable to these Sure Mercies of *David*.

Non vacillantes, sed tetragonoi.

1 Cor. 1. 6.

3. It is a sad thing to see the Heirs of this Covenant walk uncomfortably ; what are you partakers and possessours of Mercies, and yet sad ? have you interest in sweet and sure Mercies, and yet are you dejected ? what will lift you up, if mercy will not ? and what can interrupt your peace, when mercy waits on you to cheer you up ? thou lovest Estate, Health, Good-Name, Relations, Liberty ; yea, thy life is in continual hazzard, but as long as these Mercies of the Covenant are sure, thou hast no reason to complain. *Seneca* compares a Christian that's disconsolate for outward losses or crosses, to a man that hath a fine Orchard, the Trees whereof are richly laden with store of precious fruit, and because the wind blows off some leaves, the man sits down and takes on heavily, he weeps and wailles, and cryes out he is undone ; why what's

what's the matter ? why the wind hath taken off some leaves, but the roots, and trees, and fruits are safe : should not we judge that a fond and foolish man ? just thus is it with the Christian, God and Christ, promises and Gospel-mercies are sure and stedfast by an inviolable Gospel-Covenant ; yet the sinful silly soul lyes whining and complaining for the loss of some leaves of Worldly comforts, which he may live well without. Yea, saith the poor soul, but these outward things are not the chiefest cause of my trouble and discouragement ; did I know that these mercies were made sure to me, I should be comfortable, but, alas, I fear I have no share therein. I shall answer this doubt afterwards, at present I only say, lay thy hand upon thy heart, and deal ingeniously, is this the ground of thy trouble ? is not this only pretended ; is not something else the real ground ? the heart is deceitful ; look again, see what comforted thee before this outward trouble came, and what cheers thee when thy present pressure is removed ? but suppose it be jealousies about thy interest ; yet, why shouldst thou be uncomfortable ? hast not thou ventured thy soul on a sure foundation ? what reason hast thou of discouragement ? a faith of adherence brings some settlement as well as a faith of evidence : every act of faith brings some comfort ; *whom having not seen* (saith the Apostle, of a corporal sight ; so may I say of a kind of spiritual sense and assurance) *ye love, in whom though now you*

see

see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8. recumbency hath a kind of complacency: it argues want of faith to want joy, and unbelief is a shameful sin, considering the assurances given us in the Gospel: but more of this hereafter. But oh, consider first, what wrong you do to your selves by uncomfortable walking? you weaken and exhaust your strength and spirits: what discredit you bring upon the ways of God, rendring them soure and distastful in the account of others; what opposition it expresth both to many positive precepts, and the spirit of comfort, and to these sure mercies of David: methinks I hear the God of Heaven thus bespeaking the gracious troubled heart; soul, what ailes thee? what is it thou wouldst have? I have given thee many glorious gifts, pardon, reconciliation, adoption, ordinances, the benefit of all my works of Providence, a title to the good things of Earth, whiles thou livest, and a free admission into Heaven when thou dyest; nay, I have given thee my self, my Son, my Spirit, and that by the surest Marriage-Covenant: and will not all this revive thy fainting spirit? what wouldst thou have more? and what canst thou desire to make it surer to thee? speak but the word and it shall be done; but I have gone beyond thy demands, and why then art thou thus drooping and disconsolate? is thy heart revived when mortal lying man makes thee a

promise of some outward good ; and canst thou now faint, when the eternal God hath taken all these pains to assure thy troubled heart of thy interest in these sure mercies of *David* ? Oh Christians shame your selves for your uncomfortableness ; are these consolations of God small unto you ? thank your selves for your discouragements ; and let it be matter of trouble that you have so many needless, useless troubles in your souls.

4. Another fault in the Hairs of the promises whereby they are unsuitable to these mercies is unfruitfulness ; herein they do not live up to these mercies, and are exceeding defective, and imperfect, especially in two respects ; the fruit they bring forth is,
1. Small. 2. Soure fruit.

Isa 5 1.
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1. 'Tis usually but small in quantity, short of that abundance and ripeness that should come of so good a soil as mercy is, especially when mercy is the Tillage ; Gods Vineyard is in a very fruitful Hill ; so we read it, but in *Heb.* 'tis the Horn of the Son of Oyle ; I know the Son of Oyle, may import a very fat or rich soile, as Son of the Morning for exceeding bright and illustrious ; and so Gods people were planted in *Canaan*, which was an exceeding fruitful Countrey, but may at least allusively affirm of real Saints, that they are planted in the Horn of the Son of Oyle even in the Son of God, who was annointed with the Oyle of gladness above his fellows, and in whom true Believers are planted, and from whom they may

may suck and draw abundant juice and fatness, as branches do from the root of the Olive-tree, *Rom. 11. 17.* moreover what abundant pains doth God the Father (the Husbandman) take, to make souls very fruitful; he takes away such as bear no fruit at all, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit, *Joh. 15. 2.* Oh what mercies do the Saints partake of? Gospel-priviledges, Promises, Providences, Ordinances, Experiences, Comforts, Corrections, every thing that might make them fruitful in good works, in Praying, Reading, Meditating, Confessing, exact Walking; doth God distribute; and where's their answerable fruitfulness? God expects more and riper fruit; alas, how short and defective are we? how little glory do we bring to God? how little profit unto others, or comfort to our own souls? we should be filled with the fruits of righteousness, we should abound more and more, and bring forth fruits meet for sincere repentance, and truly fruitful in every good work: but are we so yea or no? I much suspect it; and what a shame is it that we should lye under the warm influences of the Sun of Righteousness so long, and be so unfruitful? the God of Heaven humble us for this.

2. I am afraid that the fruits we do bring forth are but sour and bitter, not so sweet and kindly as may be the genuine fruits and products of these sure mercies; my meaning

*Phil. 1. 11.
1 Thes. 3.
12.
Mat. 3. 8.
Col. 1. 10.*

is, that the obedience and performances of the Saints too often flow from a spirit of bondage, fear and terrour, and not from that filial Child-like disposition, and the Evangelical spirit of Adoption that should be the principle and impulsive cause of Saints spiritual actings. I know legal fears and terrors are good in their kind, to drive the soul out of it self, and unto Christ; but afterwards a spirit of love best becomes a Child of God; hence saith the Apostle, Rom.

2 Tim. 1. 7. 8. 15. *ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father*: a Child-like boldness best befits a Son; it's more acceptable to God to see souls attracted to him by filken cords of love, than scourged to him by severe flashes of wrath; Christ's souldiers are not so much prest for his service by compulsion, as they are volunteers by a spontaneous motion: all our duties should be free-will offerings. But alas, sirs, how unwilling and forced, are many of our performances? how grumbling are we in our actings for God? we go to God as though it were our burden, not with that delight and chearfulness we ought: consider sirs, how readily God offers us mercy; how freely Christ laid down his life for us; how acceptable a work it is to the blessed spirit to apply these mercies to us; and be ashamed to be so sour and dull in your performance, yea, consider the dispensation you are under; a Gospel-Covenant, made up of mercy, and
this

this should ripen our fruits to more sweetness and maturity than the old Testament-dispensation: as you know *Apricocks* and other fruit that are upon a Wall under the direct influence or powerful reflection of the Sun-beams are sooner ripe and sweeter when ripe than such as are in the shadow; so our fruits in Gospel-times should be better than theirs under the Law: but alas, how far do we fall short of *David's* warm spirit for God? or the holy acts put forth by the Saints of God under types and shadows, when these sweet mercies were not so clearly revealed to them, and the Sun of Righteousness beat not so hot upon them! Ah Christians, if you would study mercies more, your spirits would be in a better frame for duty: *David* saith, *I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy Temple*, Psal. 5. 7. observe it; the sense of Gods mercy is an excellent ingredient in the Worship of God; yea, it begets an holy awe of God; for these two are very consistent; and indeed nothing is so prevalent a motive to duty, and dissuasive from iniquity, and perswasive to the exercise of repentance, as sense of mercy is: this truth Scripture and experience will abundantly confirm. But I have been too large on this subject: only let Gods Children be humbled for their too too legal spirits; and breath after a more Evangelical Spirit by the studying of

these mercies, rather than poring upon guilt and wrath.

So much for the fourth Use.

CHAP. X.

V. **T**HE fifth Use of Exhortation is to all sorts of persons to look after their share in these sure mercies of *David*; and oh that I had a Tongue and Pen to drive this nail home; Oh what a mercy now would it be if by these sure mercies of *David*, and Discourses about them, some soul were enamoured therewith, and set in good earnest to make them its own. But shall I need to use many arguments to perswade any poor soul to accept of mercy? Yes certainly, the most part of the World forsake their own mercies by observing lying vanities; and they that can experimentally distinguish betwixt a gracious and graceless heart, find that 'tis the hardest thing in the World to close in with mercies in Gods way: 'tis an easie thing for a secure sinner to presume upon mercy, to make mercy a pillow to sleep upon with ease; to build Castles in the Aire, and feed our selves with groundless conceits of the mercy of God, this any one can do; but to be got of our own bottoms, to despair in our selves, to accept of Jesus Christ; give up our selves to God in Covenant; venture a troubled heart upon the promises

promises of Free-grace ; this is an high and hard work, an arduous and difficult undertaking : but this is done by every converted sinner : and a soul never obtains mercy till it be indeed savingly converted, 1 Tim.

1. 13. if you be *Lo-ammi*, not Gods people by way of Covenant, you are *Lo-ruhamah*, i.e. persons that have not obtained mercy. Oh look after an interest in these sure mercies of *David* : Consider,

1. Nothing else in the World can be made sure ; we live in an inconstant World ; every thing is upon the wheel of change ; sublunary comforts are like the Moon ; sometimes at the full, and sometimes in the wane, nothing continues in a fixed station ; a man may be rich to day, and poor to morrow, therefore the Apostle calls them uncertain riches, or uncertainty of riches in the abstract ; now then saith the Apostle, Christians must lay up in store for themselves

a good foundation against the time to come, 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. Alas, riches were never true to any that trusted to them ; the things of the World are like smogak or sand, with which you cannot fill your hand ; who would be so fond of that which a man knows he cannot keep ? 'tis the part of a wise man to purchase such an estate as he may enjoy ; friends, goods, honours, health, pleasures have their periods, but these mercies are sure and everlasting. On the vast

Hof. 1 6, 9

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said,
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Non est
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perinde

paupertas, sed insatiabilitas ; que si recesserit, qui bonus est dives quoque furit. Clem. Alexand. Strom. lib. 1.

difference; it's very considerable, that the things that make us happy, can only be made sure; but the things of this World which cannot make us happy cannot be made sure; and indeed whatever may be lost is not capable of making any truly happy: now Heavenly things are durable as well as suitable to the soul, therefore let us all take the counsel of our Lord Jesus in Mat. 6. 19, 20. *Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal ——— But lay up for your selves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

2. Except you have an interest in these sure mercies, common mercies are accursed to you, nor indeed have you any real Covenant-title to any thing you enjoy, whatever interest you have before men [*in foro humano*] yet [*in foro Dei*] you are in the Court of Heaven (in a sort) usurpers, however you have forfeited all by actual rebellion, and have but what you enjoy as condemned Prisoners or Malefactors to keep you alive till execution of the righteous sentence of condemnation. Oh the woful condition of Unconverted sinners! they

1 Cor. 16.

22.

Prov. 3. 33.

are accursed with a Gospel-curse, and under a dreadful sentence of excommunication: there's a curse in their houses, on their actions, on their relations, as to them; there's a curse upon their very blessings,

Mal.

Mal. 2. 2. there's a plague in their apparel, poison in their meat ; and we may say, death is in the Pot as to all their enjoyments ; my meaning is, nothing is truly sanctified or perfumed with Covenant-mercy ; and if God give it a commission, whatever they enjoy may be their bane : whithersoever they go, a curse goes with them ; whatever they partake of, a curse meets them in it ; whoever they are with, a curse attends them. Oh fearful state ! it was sad to be under the curse of a mortal man ; *Cham* found his Father *Noah's* curse heavy ; but oh how heavy is the curse of Almighty God, who with a word can send the soul into Hell ; and follow his stroke into another World ? dear friends, who would live in this cursed state another hour ? on the contrary, whosoever hath these mercies of the Covenant hath all blessings blessed ; yea, and also crosses ; and, in a sort, curses are turned into blessings : who would not be covetous of such a state ? But to hasten.

3. Without these Covenant-mercies the soul is not accepted in its choicest duties : neither person nor performance is owned by God ; it is only upon a Covenant-account that any are accepted ; indeed in the Covenant of works the person was accepted for the works sake, but in the Covenant of Grace, God accepts the person first, then the work ; if the man be in Christ, then
the

the offering is taken in good part, though it be but a Turtle-dove or young Pigeon, though but a sigh or groan; God takes a Posie of Flowers [of sweet-smelling Graces] though mixed with stinking Weeds, and pricking Bryars of vanity and corruption, gathered by a Child, and perfumed by Christs Mediation, and is better pleased therewith, than with the most odoriferous gifts of uncovered souls, where the heart is destitute of Covenant

Prov. 15. 8. *graces; alas, the prayer of the wicked is abomination to God, the great and jealous God challengeth the wicked man*

Psal. 50.
16, 17.

that hath not Covenant-mercies in his heart, for taking Covenant-promises into his mouth: What hast thou to do? saith God, *q. d.* thou poor graceless sinner, thou profanest my holy name, and provokest the eyes of my glory in the works and worship by which thou thinkest thou dost most honour and pleasest me: in the state wherein thou art, I cannot endure to look towards thee; I abhor thy person and performance, thy costly incense is a smoak in my nose; I can see through thy painted beauty, at thy rotten inside; thy gilded Eloquence and Rhetorical Flourishes are no more to me, than the roaring of Bears or howling of Doggs; get out of my sight thou sorry waining hypocrite; all thy duties are as Cyphers, and signifie nothing except the Mediatour as the principal

cipal and only figure be set before them, and the spirit of God write and indite them, which are two of the greatest mercies of the new Covenant. Ah sirs, God doth despise the most melodious Tunes of wicked men, but *a broken and contrite heart he despiseth not*; that's sweet Musick in his blessed ears; for a broaken heart is a Covenant-mercy: these mercies are brave Ornaments to believing souls, and render them lovely and amiable in the sight of God: every penitent Tear is a rich Pearl; every Prayer pierceth Heayen and fetcheth down abundant incomes from the Throne of Grace. Oh what a difference do these mercies make in persons, performances and acceptance with God?

Psal. 51. 17.

4. Without these mercies you have no solid ground of peace, comfort, or satisfaction: for without these you are not only under the sentence of condemnation; but you have no real ground to hope that the sentence shall not be executed this very hour; 'tis a wonder to think that graceless souls should be so merry that are hanging over the pit of Hell, but by the rotten thread of a mortal life: Oh how suddenly may this brittle glass be broken, and they are gone for ever! for ought they know when they go to bed; God may say (as once he did to one as rich and secure as these sensual sots) *this night shall thy soul be required from thee*; 'tis a wonder to me how souls can rest quietly that are conscious

to themselves or groundedly suspect they are not in Covenant with God ; and so know

Redite praevaricatores ad cor, & inhaerete ei qui facit vos : state cum eo & stabitis : requiescite in eo & quiescebitis. Quo itis in aspectu quo itis ? bonum quod amatis ab illo est : sed quantum est & illum bonum est ad suave.— Vid Aug. conf. lib. 4. c. 12.

not that they shall be another moment out of Everlasting torments : but God leaves them to seared Consciences, and Satan and the World joyn with their deceitful lusts to lull them asleep, till God awake them by true repentance or eternal vengeance : but God hath a time to shake the foundations

of this bastard-peace, and set the soul upon the sure bottom of Covenant-relation, and interest in Jesus Christ, which only brings true content and comfort, peace that passeth understanding, joy in the Holy Ghost, and a sweet Sabbath of refreshment to the tossed soul : here the noble soul may (as it were) terminate its desires, and expatriate its largest faculties upon its only portion, God in Covenant ; and thence will result continual ground of triumph and exaltation, for these mercies are suitable and adæquate to the immortal soul, and will support it under greatest outward pressures, and in the hour of death ; therefore I may conclude this Exhortation with ver. 2. of this Chapter, *Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness.*

The Sure Mercies of David.

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5. These mercies of the Covenant will render your condition safe whatever befalls you ; we little know what may befall us betwixt this and the grave, who knows what a day may bring forth ? man is born to trouble, a Saint is born again to more ; bad news may come as *Jobs* Messengers, treading in each others steps ; losses and crosses may put us on sad discouragements : Oh but now to have a Covenanted God, a Christ and all the fore-mentioned Covenant-mercies to solace the soul, what mercy will this be ? when the true Christian can say, *I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine ; my flesh and heart fail but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever* : let the Sea roar, Men rage, Heavens look black, and Earth tremble, I lye at Anchor in a sure Port, I trust in God, and fear no evil tidings from below ; *God is my refuge and help, yea my present help in time of trouble* ; evils shall either miss me or mend me ; all winds blow my soul nearer my Haven, all dispensations hitch me a step nearer Heaven, for all things work together for my good ; my Covenanted God will teach me to profit by Word, Rod, by Mercys, Crosses, Ordinances, Providences : God is my Sun and Shield, to enlighten me in times of darkness, to protect me in times of danger, he will command a guard of Angels to attend me ; yea, his wings shall cover me, his comforts shall refresh my soul ; he will guide me here by his counsel, and afterwards receive me

Psal. 112. 7.

Psal. 46.

1, 2.

me to glory. Oh happy soul that hath the God of *Jacob* for his God ; and these Covenant-mercies his portion : who can hurt such a soul ? But oh the woful state of one that hath not the name of God as a Tower or Chamber to run unto when evils are approaching ? how dreadful was *Saul's* state, when the Philistines were upon him and God had forsaken him ? just such will be the condition of a soul destitute of Covenant-mercies in the day of publick or personal calamity ; alas all they bore up their carnal hearts with is gone, and God is gone, and now they must either burst with grief, or through despair make away themselves, as *Judas* and *Achitophel*. Oh forlorn state of such as took not God for their God ; first think seriously of these things.

See Psal.
52. 7.

6. These Covenant-mercies will have mighty influence upon your spirits in Gods service ; and in your conversation, an interest in the mercies of the Covenant will make you fear God, and tremble to offend so good a God ; *there is forgiveness with thee that thou must be feared*, Psal. 130. 4. nay, fear to offend God is one great mercy of the Covenant : these will melt your hearts into tears of Evangelical repentance for offending God ; as you may gather from *Zech.* 12. 10. nay, brokenness of heart is one of the mercies of the Covenant : sence of these mercies will make your souls love God clearly, *Luk.* 7. 47. nay, love to God is one of the mercies of the Covenant ;
and

and so for the rest of the Graces ; there's not an useful disposition requisite to qualifie us for Gods service, but 'tis contained in the Covenant ; hereby we shall know Gods will, be willing to obey it ; delight our selves in Gods service, as *David*, Psal. 5. 7. *I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy, and in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy Temple : we shall then sing in the ways of the Lord, and in the height of Zion, and flow together for the goodness of the Lord*—— Jerem. 31. 12.

i. e. the goodness of the Lord will engage the Saints to come with chearfulness into Gods presence, and thank God for an opportunity of waiting on so good a God : holy hearts delight in holy works ; grace fits the soul for God ; Covenant-mercies render a soul capable of and suitable to Covenant-duties ; and the more you partake of these mercies, the more delight will you take in duty : the more like you are to God, the more delight will you take in God ; and God will delight more in you ; and so there will be sweet fellowship betwixt God and your souls : on the contrary, carnal spirits cannot endure spiritual exercises ; they come to duties as a Bear to the stake, and when they are therein, they are upon a Rack ; Lord be merciful to such a soul.

7. These Covenant-mercies will not leave the soul till they have brought it to Heaven : Gods mercies are in the Heavens ; that's their proper Element ; and they never cease

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cease moving and mounting the soul upwards till they have raised him up into the highest Heavens: where they shall *drink of the River of his pleasures*, Psal. 36. 5, 8. now Covenanted souls do but taste that the Lord is gracious, but then they shall eat and drink abundantly, and shall be satisfied with marrow and fatness; yea, bathe their souls in that *fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. these mercies will make you rich towards God, and rich with God to all Eternity: if you dye with Covenant-mercies in your hearts, you depart like Old *Simeon* with Christ in your arms, and dye in peace, and rest with God: these sure mercies lead the van to eternal glory, which comes in the rear of a temporal life and spiritual graces: yea, eternal life is begun here, as Scripture testifies; how is that? why no otherwise than by the possession of these spiritual mercies, and Communion with God thereby: *this is eternal life, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ*, Joh. 17. 3. You lay hold on eternal life here by laying hold on these best blessings and Covenant-mercies: *he that hath the Son hath life*, and by believing on the name of the Son of God, he may know that he hath eternal life; for *he hath the record in himself*, See 1 *John* 5. 10—13. what is this witness? it is contained in some of these sure mercies of *David*. Oh therefore, for a share and interest therein? on the other hand he that hath nothing to do with these sure mercies hath

1 Tim. 6.
12, 19.

hath nothing to do with eternal glory : such as are strangers from the Covenants of promise, have no hope of a better life ; *as the Tree falls so shall it lye* ; and such as are found without mercies in their hearts at death, shall be found destitute of mercy at the great day. Eph. 2. 12.

There is one sort of persons, I would more particularly press to look after their share in these sure mercies of David, and those are the Children of Godly Parents ; and hence Solomon prays, *Remember the mercies of David thy Servant*, 2 Chron. 6. 42. so you that are the posterity of godly predecessors, cry out for and apply the mercies of your Fathers ; and there are two cogent arguments in the quality of these mercies the Text mentioneth, for here they are said to be sure ; consider, 1. Your Parents found them sure to them. 2. The Promise will make them sure to you.

1. Consider your Religious Ancestours found these Covenant-mercies sure to their own souls : *our Fathers trusted in thee, cryed to thee, they were delivered, were not ashamed*, Psal. 22. 4, 5. Heathens did pertinaciously adhere to the Religion of their Predecessors ; and shall Children of Godly Parents forsake their Fathers God ? and such a God as never failed them ; Moses in his Song, *sith, he is my God and I will prepare him an habitation ; my Fathers God and I will call him*, Exod. 15. 2. enquire and search ;

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you that are the seed of his servants, had your fathers ever cause to complain of God? was he not as good as his word to them? did he not punctually keep touch with them, and make good all his promises to them? did not your Godly Parents breath their last with good speeches of God? did they not affectionately commend his service to you upon their death-bed? reflect upon their dying words; did they not proclaim to all the World, that God was a faithful Covenant-keeping God to them? and did they not assure you he would be as good to you if you embrace him and keep his ways? yea, cannot you bear witness for them, that their last words were speaking well of God; as *Jacob* and *Joseph* both did upon their death-bed? did not they in the faith and sense thereof commend you into the hands of their gracious God, as *Jacob*, Gen. 48. 15, 16. *the God which fed me all my life long unto this day; the Angel which Redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads* — did they not express particular perswasions of some mercy, as those blessed Patriarchs, *Behold, I dye, but God shall be with you, and bring you again to the Land of your Fathers?* Yea, cannot you that are Children bear your Testimony for God that he hath been and done according to your Parents faith and hope? *Solomon* could say, after *David's* death, *thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my Father, great mercy, or bounty* — but that's not

Gen. 48. 21.

chap 50. 24.

all,

all, and thou hast kept, saith he, for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a Son to sit upon his Throne, 1 King. 3: 6. and, I question not but many of you can say as much for God, that God hath had respect to you in Temporals because you were the seed of such as were dear to him. Oh follow their steps and you shall fare as they fared.

2. Yet further, you that are the Children of God's Parents, you lye directly under the influences of these sure mercies; the promise is made to believers and to their seed, Gen. 17. 7. Act. 2. 38, 39. such promises bear up the hearts of Gods poor expiring servants, concerning their surviving Children: Well then, let Children claim their interest; plead this grant; none of you will lose your inheritance for want of looking after it; if your Landlord promise you a Lease of your Tenement after your Father's decease if you sue to him for it, and pay the accustomed fine, will you be so mad as to be turned out of your Farm, and the Heritage left by your Fathers, than own your just and loving Landlord according to the Laws of the Land? no man is so fond in Temporals, and why should you be so foolish in Spirituals? Ah Christians, look after your Patrimony; despise not your Birth-right; is it nothing to you to be born of believing Parents? remember your Parents Prayers and Tears, their Hopes and fears. Oh consider, how it comforted

Isa. 44. 3.
59. 21.
Exod. 20. 6.
See 2 Sam.
23. 1-5.
Act. 3. 25.

their hearts upon their death-bed, that they left you under a good Covenant, and bequeathed to you a goodly heritage; and why should your Parents be deceived in their hopes, and meet you strangers at the great day to God and Christ, to be set with filthy Goats upon the left hand for ever? why will you embezzle or sin away this fair estate? why will you not sue out this blessed Charter for your own souls in the Court of Heaven? God is as willing to make it over to you, as ever he was to bestow it on your Parents; he is loath to cut off his kindness from their seed; he looks after you in your soul-destroying practices; and saith, as once to Israel that did so wofully degenerate, Jer. 22. 5. q. d. *I remember the kindness that in former times there was betwixt thy ancestors, and me. Oh their zeal in running after me, the holy services they did perform to me? thy Father, or Grand-father and some former Generations, maintained intercourse with me, and I with them; there was love of espousals betwixt us; and I am sure I was not wanting to them; I lookt carefully to them; all that sought to devour them, were my enemies, they did offend me; and I brought evil upon them; I pleaded their cause while they lived, and I took them seasonably to Heaven, and if thou art their off-spring, wouldest have put me to't, I would have done as much for thee; if thou hadst but laid hold of that Covenant; those very Covenant-mercies should have been thine, but thou art gone back, thou wilt have none*

of me, but walk after new upstart vanities ; thou wilt not vouchsafe so much as to enquire after the God of thy Fathers that was so faithful to them, and did so much for them : but let me ask thee, since thou wilt needs leave me, what iniquity have either thy Fathers or thou found in me ? produce thy reasons, testify against me, did I ever do thee any wrong ? have I not always done thee good ? Oh soul, whithersoever thou goest from me, thou missest of such a God as thy Fathers served. God seems in that Scripture to speak after this manner : Oh hearken to the eternal God, if you will not heed the dying words of your mortal Parents, that dyed in the Lord ; though one would think those should move and melt your hearts into tears of Gospel sorrow, why should your dear deceased Parents rise up in judgement against you at the day of judgement ? when it shall be enquired whether they did their duty, they must needs answer according to truth, that they did instruct, correct, counsel, admonish their wandring Prodigal Children, they brought them to Ordinances, prayed for them, wept and travelled again for them, and yet could not prevail ; and now must come in to bear witness against them, and must rejoyce in Gods just vengeance upon them. Oh what a sad case will these rebellious Children be in ? 'tis no pleading priviledges by means of believing Parents at that day ; the higher you were advanced therein, the lower will you be cast

A like Ex-
postulation
see in Mir.
6. 3, 4.

down to Hell, *Matth. 11. 23.* oh how terrible will it be to see godly Parents in Heaven, and themselves *cast into utter darkness*; yea, to see strangers (or the Converted Children of Heathenish Parents) *come from East, and West, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven*, but the Children of these Kingdoms (posterity of Covenanted Parents) *cast out into utter darkness* — See *Mat. 8. 11, 12.*

Let me therefore perswade all graceless Children to look about them; do you above all others take heed of miscarrying; greater expectations are from you than others; the surviving friends of your Religious Ancestors look after you, and enquire what you do; oh rejoyce their hearts by walking in the steps of your predecessours; I shall bespeak you, yea charge you, in the words of Reverend Mr. *Bolton* upon his death-bed, that none of you will dare to meet us at the great Tribunal in an unregenerate state: let every Child of Godly Parents plead for Covenant-mercies, as once *Solomon* did, *2 Chron. 1. 8, 9.* *thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my Father* — now O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my Father be established — thus do you plead with God, and say, Lord my Parents embraced the Covenant; it was thy free-grace to choose them, and set thy heart upon them; and is that Grace weary? canst thou not own me with Covenant-mercy? nay, dost thou not call that mercy to *Abraham* by the

the surer name of truth unto *Jacob*? am not I a Child of the promise; Lord cut not off the entail of Covenant-mercies from me or mine for ever.

But I must hasten, let all souls seek after a share in Covenant-mercies, you that are afar off, and you that are near, Children of the good and of the bad; draw near hither, take hold of this Covenant; here's mercy for you all, these mercies are attainable; *let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 7.* they are mercies, fear not being made welcome, they are sure mercies; fear not disappointment: thou hast a tender of mercies, that's mercy, yea such a mercy as the fallen Angels never had, or ever shall have; and if thou refuse thou dost not only neglect a great salvation, but the Devils shall rise up in judgement against thee: it's a wonder of mercies that thou art not past hopes of mercies, thou hast run a wild course; yet, there's hope if now thou come upon the call of mercy? all the condition God requires is acceptance of Christ and Grace; it sticks at your wills, and if you wilfully reject mercy what must save you? if you will be damned who can hinder you? you must thank your selves for ever: the God of mercy stands waiting at your door, the Prince of peace purchased mercy at a dear rate; the spirit of grace knocks and

put in his blessed finger at the hole of the door, will not yet your bowels move towards him? he beseecheth you to be reconciled that might with a word command you into Hell; and will you have no bowels of mercy towards your own souls? Ministers

2 Cor. 5.

20.
Rom. 12. 1.

Intreat, Travel, Study, Weep, and earnestly beseech you for mercies sake, to come in: and yet will you stand out? and must I after all this pains leave you short of mercy, these sure and sweet mercies? God forbid, however remember you were warned.

CHAP. XI.

VI. **T**HE sixth Use is of Instruction and Direction, to sinners and Saints, wherein I shall (as paper-room permits) lay before you four sorts of Directions.

1. *What is a poor soul to do that he may obtain interest in these mercies?*
2. *How a doubting soul may be assured of these Covenant-mercies?*
3. *In what cases may a Christian improve Covenant-mercies?*
4. *How a good soul that hath interest in these mercies is to behave himself?*

For the first, which concerns graceless souls; poor unregenerate Creatures, if any such enquire what they must do that they may have a part and portion in these sure mercies of David, I shall briefly propound these seven Directions;

1. Make a strict enquiry into your state; diligently examine what title you have to the Mercies of the Covenant, practise this great and much neglected duty of self-tryal, whether you have closed with the Covenant, whether Christ be in you, or you be in Christ; whether faith be in you, or you be in the faith; self-knowledge is a good degree towards saving grace. Authology is the first step to Theology; a man cannot, will

2 Cor. 13.

5.

will not look after mercy till he know his own misery ; they that conceit themselves to be something, deceive themselves ; therefore let every man prove his own work, Gal. 6. 3, 4. Oh how many thousands with a vain hope do descend into everlasting burnings ? how many presume they have as good a title to mercy as any, and fall short of it ? mistakes in this point are dangerous and damning, therefore soul, try thy title, be at a point concerning thy state ; some are Children of wrath, and have not obtained mercy ; yea, all are such by nature : that Grace that changeth our title, changeth our spirits, therefore deal faithfully with your own hearts ; ask them whether they be renewed, changed, soundly converted ? ask your selves whether you be new Creatures ? be not put off with silence or a slight answer ; remember life and death depends on the resolution of this important question : you must be tryed another day, you cannot evade Gods impartial search, only consider, there's no returning back to mend the matter, as you are found then at the great day, so must you abide for ever ; but here, if you find a flaw in your title, you may have it well repaired ; and this is the first step to mending what's amiss, therefore get a distinct knowledge of your state.

2. Work on your hearts the misery of a souls being destitute of these sure mercies ; yea, if upon serious examination you find that your souls have no interest therein, oh consider

consider what a dreadful, doleful state your souls are in ; you are indeed *Lo-rubamahs*, bond-slaves of Satan, enemies to God, destitute of Christ, and have nothing to do with the good things of the Gospel ; take your state from the blessed Apostle, or rather from the infallible dictates of the Holy Ghost, *Ephes.* 2. 12. without Christ, (whatever confident claim you may lay to him, however you may boast of him) Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, (*i. e.* no members of the true Church, though you may presumptuously call and account your selves the only Sons of the Church ; you have nothing to do with the spiritual privileges, and sweet Communion of Saints) you are strangers from the Covenants of Promise, (*i. e.* you are not in this new Covenant, but under that of works, and have not right to any one promise, and so to no Gospel-mercy) and therefore without hope, yea, without God in the World ; 'tis inexpressible, yea inconceivable misery that a graceless soul is in ; it is ready every moment to drop into Hell, must be shut out of Heaven ; God is angry with him every moment, Satan hath him in a string, leads him whither he list ; and if he dye this moment he is gone for ever. Oh work on your hearts such sad thoughts as these, awake Conscience, rouze up affections, then cry out with the Publican, striking on your breast, *God be merciful to me a sinner ;* Wo is me, *Luk. 18. 13.* wretched Creature that I am, what shall I do,

do, I am undone, the guilt of sin is upon me, mercy is far from me ; I have despised free-grace, and now I may fear mercy is turned into fury ; long forbearance will end in just vengeance. Oh is there any hope for a forlorn wretch ? have not I worn out my day of grace ? is there any hope for me ? surely, a little mercy will not serve my turn ; I am a great sinner, yea, the chiefest of sinners, there must be a larger dole of mercy to me than others : Oh *what shall I do, men and brethren, what must I do to be saved ?* thus, first, bemoan your state, it's not a saying all are sinners, and God is merciful, that will serve the turn, but you must be sin-sick, then you'll desire a Physitian, else

Mat. 9. 12, you'll slight and scorn both Christ and Co-

13. venant, and all the mercies thereof.

3. Be thankful for, but be not content with common mercies ; they are good in their kind, and for their use and ends, but these are not suitable to, or sufficient for the soul ; a Christian should be content with any thing in the World, yet content with nothing in the World ; the worst of the World doth please a Child of God with God, the best of it cannot, should not please him without God ; you must look on these things as good in the way for a staff or bait, but not good as a Center or end, to terminate your thoughts upon ; Remember, the worst of men may have the best of these blessings, yet have them with a curse, and may perish with them ; therefore say

say as *David*, *Psal.* 119. 132. look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou wifest to do unto those that love thy name; and elsewhere he desires to be remembered with the favour of Gods people; as if *David* should say. Lord there are common mercies which fill the belly, cloath the back, supply outward wants, but these thou givest to the bad as well as good; and though these are more than I deserve, yet more than these I desire; these will only serve me the day and date of my temporal life, and will take their leave of me at death; but Lord, thou hast better mercies to bestow than these; even such as will stick by me in life and death; mercies that concern the soul, such as thou bestowest on Children, and on heirs of promise: Oh let me come in for my Childs part of those, and put me not off with any else; none besides will fit or fill my precious soul, or serve my turn: I must say as once the Children of *Joseph* said to *Joshua*, why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people; so must I say, if I were a brute Creature, one lot of provender for this Carcass would serve my turn; but seeing I am blessed with a noble, never-dying soul, that hath large capacious faculties, I must have a double portion, a single share is not enough; something that will live when this body is laid in the grave, and nothing is so fit for this immortal soul, as these sure mercies of *David*. Oh that I had

Psal. 106.

Josh. 17.
14.

had my share thereof; more than these I cannot reasonably desire, expect, enjoy, and less than these my soul is not content withal.

4. Cast out and Cashier all sin, break off thy sinful league with filthy lusts; these sure mercies will not lodge in a foul breast: where Christ takes up his habitation, sin hath not Dominion; God and sin go contrary ways; mercies mount the soul upwards, corruption pulls the soul downwards; you must be separate, and touch no unclean thing, if you would be received, embraced as Children, and have God for your Father, 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. be you sure
- Psal. 94. 20. the Throne of iniquity hath no fellowship with God, and God will challenge such as hate instruction, and wilfully run into sin, and say, *what hast thou to do ——— to take*
- Psal. 50. *my Covenant in thy mouth*; do not think to yoke Christ and Belial; God will not be merciful to any wicked Transgressor: do not think to divide mercies and faithfulness, make account to enjoy mercies only in the way of truth, that you may be able to say as David, Psal. 119. 41. *let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation according to thy word*, q. d. O Lord thou hast mercies to bestow, and thou hast told me, how and to whom thou wilt distribute these mercies, it is to such as fear, and love, and obey thee, and devote themselves to thee; why here I am, I have served sin and Satan too long, now I abhor the ways in which my soul hath

hath walked, I abandon works of darkness, I cut off a right-hand sin, and pluck out a right-eye lust, and now I am in the road of mercy, not as though this merited thy favour, but as a condition absolutely necessary in the souls of such as obtain mercy, according to the precepts and promises of the Word; and now though I cannot challenge mercy, yet I humbly plead thy promise for mercy, even Covenant-mercies; I have forsaken my sinful ways and wicked thoughts; *oh be merciful to me according to thy word*; oh entertain me, and then I shall not lose but change my pleasures, the sensual pleasures of the flesh, for solid, sacred, and soul-satisfying delights in Christ and Grace: thus renounce sin, and you shall have what's infinitely better, but that's not all.

Isa. 1. 16,
18.
Isa. 55. 7.

Psal. 119.
58.

5. Renounce your own Righteousness, and look after these sure mercies only for mercy sake; the wise merchant sold all, not only his worldly enjoyments, but self-conceited thoughts of his own Righteousness, for this pearl of price; deny your selves, then enjoy God, mercy is slighted when you dream of merit; the poor Jews that sought to establish their own righteousness, would not submit to the Righteousness of God, *Rom. 10. 3.* they had something of their own to lean to, they scorned Gods way of saving sinners; they would not be beholding to Gods mercy, and so went without: the poor Publican

Mat. 13. 46.

was

was justified, but the proud Pharisee condemned: come as craving Beggars, not as rich Purchasers: say as *David*, *save me for thy mercies sake*, *Psal. 6. 4. q. d.* Lord, I am a weak, worthless, wicked Creature, if thou mark iniquity who can stand? I am not worthy of one crumb of kindness, most worthy of thy fiercest displeasure; if thou condemn me thou art righteous, if thou save me thou art infinitely gracious; Lord, when thy wrath is ready to wax hot, and justice lifts up thy hand to strike the fatal blow, then reflect upon thy working bowels of tender mercy, and stop thy hand from a righteous executing of thy justly deserved sentence of condemnation; Remember thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses, for they have been ever of old—— Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions, according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord: thus that good man pleads with God, *Psal. 25. 6, 7.* and thus do thou, come empty handed, *buy wine and milk without money and without price*; mercy were not mercy if it were bought at valuable rates; but as that's not possible, so that soul that comes to purchase shall be dealt without, for all the good things of the Gospel are of free and undeserved gift.

6. Close with Jesus Christ the root and spring of these Covenant-mercies; I told you in the doctrinal part, these mercies are made sure in and by Christ to all the heirs of

of promise : would you then enjoy the benefit of these mercies, accept of Jesus Christ by a sound and lively faith : you can expect no mercy but through a Mediator, *grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ* : Joh. 1. 16. all mercy is laid up in Christ, as the great Store-house, and is to be fetcht out by faith, those souls are under a dangerous and soul-damning mistake that imagine God to be any other ways merciful than in Christ : *it's even horrible, saith Luther, to think of God out of Christ*, this is the only Gospel-way of obtaining mercy ; God bleffeth us Eph. 1. 3. 6. with these spiritual blessings in Christ, and we are accepted in the beloved. Well then, how have poor souls interest in Christ ? this is only by faith, which is the souls accepting of him upon his own terms : Joh. 1. 12. here I must not digress into the large field of that useful subject of saving faith, but must refer you to the large discourses upon this radical, fundamental grace, and I beseech you be not mistaken in this ; here lyes the hinge and vitals of Religion, even in an entire, affectionate, voluntary, and universal accepting of Jesus Christ, as our King, Priest, Prophet, to be ruled, guided, saved by him in his own way. Oh sirs, if you do not this you do nothing ; if you believe you shall be saved, but if you believe not Mark 16. 16. you shall be damned, that's plain English ; and truly, my friends, all men have not faith, this faith of Gods Elect, this precious faith. Oh therefore look after it, long

O

for

for it, come with a broken heart to a bleeding Christ, come weary and heavy laden, and lay your load on the Son of God; come with a troubled, humbled heart, wounded with a sense of sin, and look up to this brazen Serpent for help and healing; reach out thy trembling hand and get hold of the skirt of his garment, or rather with old *Simeon* embrace Jesus Christ in the arms of thy faith, and then thou hast these mercies of the Covenant.

7. Enter into a solemn Covenant with the Lord; no way to be interested in the mercies of the Covenant, but by entering into the Covenant; this, this is the work I would persuade your souls unto, this indeed is the life of Religion, which is so called [*a religando*] from binding, because it binds, (as it were) God and man together, and joyns their interests in this blessed bond of the Covenant; O therefore set your selves to enter a solemn engagement; give up your selves to the Lord, openly profess that you are the Lords, or else subscribe with your hand, and yield up your selves to the Lord, to whom of right you do belong, and take God as your God, say, *the Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey*, as the people of *Israel* once; and thus do you make a Covenant this day, lift up your hand to the most high God, as once *Jacob* did, who made a vow, saying, *if God will be with me and keep me in this way that I*

2 Cor. 8. 5.

Isa. 44. 5.

2 Chron.

30. 8.

Josh. 24.

24. 25.

— then shall the Lord be my God, Gen. 28. 20, 21. now consider, friends, hath not God done as much or more for you as *Ja-*
acob here desires? and why should you not take God for your God? say thus, I have heard of the Lords goodnels, nay, I have felt and drunk a large share of Gods kindness and compassion; he hath done that for me, that none else could, and hath undertaken to do yet much more, and therefore God forbid, that I should cleave to any other God all my days; as I will be wholly the Lords, so I will have only the Lord, and as he is the God, so he shall be my God; this is that which the Scripture calls avouching the Lord to be our God, and if we avouch him to be our God, he will avouch us to be his people, *Deut.* 26. 17, 18. which imports the mutual conditions of this blessed Covenant, even a reciprocal embracing and accepting each other, the Saints take God to be theirs by the saving Grace of faith, and God entertains them by a gracious act of favour, love and condescension; only be sure you remember that the Articles of Agreement are of Gods own framing, and the soul must come up wholly unto his terms, else no bargain; God will not abate any thing of his appointed conditions, it must be sincere faith, though it be but weak, which empties the soul of sin, and self, and turns wholly to God, and doth resign up it self universally, voluntarily, and perpetually to be the Lords; and in the

Hof. 3. 3.

Mat. 10. 37.
Luk. 14.
28, 29.

same manner takes God to be his : and looks upon this as his mercy, as well as his duty ; his highest preferment, as well as his greatest employment, and sweetest enjoyment ; Oh, thinks a good soul, that I could be more the Lords than I am ; I am too much mine own, but I will enter into the strictest Matrimonial bond to be only for God and not for another, then he would be for me ; and oh that I could take the Lord wholly for mine, and only as mine, and joyn no other Lovers with him, I need none but him, he is allsufficient, and my exceeding sweet and great reward : and upon this condition God takes you, and you shall have advantage by him, and the Gospel-Covenant, and all the mercies of it ; and if you be not willing to *forsake all for him*, you are not worthy of him : but I shall spend no more time about this, because so many have writ of a souls Covenanting with God : See Mr. Baxter's *Saints Rest*, par. 1. p. 176. to 182 — & *alibi passim*. Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Allen, Mr. Vincent have prescribed directions, and a form of words for a solemn Covenanting with God. See also *Reflections*. 8. in the close of this *Treatise*. p. —

Thus much for the first Classe or rank of Directions.

CHAP. XII.

2. **H**OW a poor-doubting soul may assure to it self these Covenant-mercies? many good souls may have an interest in these, yet not be assured of their interest, which yet is of great consequence and concernment, though not to the being, yet to the well-being of a Christian; therefore we are commanded to give diligence *to make our Vit. Ant. calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. not in in loc.* respect of God say Interpreters, with whom all things are firm and undoubted, but in respect of others, say some, that those with whom we live may see the Tree is good, because the fruits are good; but I rather take it that we must labour to clear these up to our own souls, that we may have some real well-grounded assurance thereof in our hearts, and both these are mercies included in the Gospel-covenant; only take notice that calling is before election, and there we must begin, and so ascend from the work of Grace in our hearts to the workings of Grace in Gods heart, for our love is a reflection of his love to us: Grace is a fruit of Election: this then is a weighty case of Conscience; suppose a gracious soul be dark and doubtful about his state, and is full of questionings and disputings whether these sure mercies of the Covenant do belong to him; what must such a soul do that it

See this
point
handled
solidly in
a Treat.
called,

A Believers duty towards the Spirit, &c. on Ephes 4 30. Read
6. Direct. pag. 158. to 183. See *Baxt.* 32 Directions.

1. Study the Precepts, Promises, and
Precedents in the Scriptures, be diligent in
reading the Word of God: Oh of what use
would this be; there you may find what
God commands, how Saints have obeyed,
by what means they have cleared up their
integrity and interest in Christ; here you
may find what are the conditions of the
Covenant, and upon what terms the mer-
cies thereof may be enjoyed, and what are
the infallible Characters of such as have re-
ceived benefit thereby; here you may find
Christ the main and choicest mercy of the
Covenant; yea, for this end was the Scrip-
ture written, that we might have comfort
in God, and by consequence also, assurance
of our interest in him, *Rom.* 15. 4. for this
cause did both Christ speak, and John write
Divine truths that are upon record, that
his joy might be in us, yea that our joy
might be full: an express Text you have
in 1 Joh. 5. 13. *these things have I written
unto you, that believe in the name of the Son
of God, that ye may know ye have eternal life:*
the more you study the Scriptures, the more
clearly you may read your names in the

Book

Joh. 15. 11.

1 *Joh.* 1. 4.

Book of Life : your hearts, if sincere, will echo to the word you read, because the Law of God is written in your hearts therefore read and study this blessed Book ; these words are Charters of your heavenly inheritance ; food for your hungry appetites, glasses in which you may discern the face of your souls. Oh Christians, neglect not the Scriptures, look up for a right understanding, and due application of every passage therein, and then comfort your selves, and one another with these words, 1 Thes. 4. ult.

2. Attend upon a quickning Ministry, here the terms of the Gospel are propounded ; the mercies of the Covenant are displayed ; true believers discovered and characterized ; here you may meet with a *Barnabas* as well as with a *Boanerges* ; yea, it may be the hand that wounded may heal you : God usually makes the fruit of the lips to be peace, and many times sends some choice Interpreter to declare unto a man his righteousness, and clear up his integrity : and therefore is it that God directs all such as walk in darkness to obey the voice of his servants, or rather gives this as their character that they do so ; and God gives Ministers a charge to comfort his people, and lays up comforts in their Breasts to this end that they may comfort such as are cast down ; Oh the reviving words, you may hear in the Ministry of the Word ? here you may hear doubts resolved, cases of

Isa. 57. 19.

Job 33. 23.

Isa. 50. 10.

Isa. 40. 1, 2.

2 Cor. 1. 4.

Isa. 59. 21.

Gal. 3. 2, 3.

Mat. 28. 10.

Isa. 44. 26.

Mat. 18. 18.

Conscience propounded, answered, and hearts opened, anatomized ; here the spirit of God is often conveyed which seals up the believing soul to the day of redemption: the presence of God accompanies his institution ; so that what the Minister declares in the name and by the Authority of Christ, according to the word he will ratifie, back, and confirm it in Heaven : and how many drooping heirs of promise hath God erected, satisfied, encouraged about their title to Covenant-mercies by this Ordinance ? Oh the advantage that many have got thereby ; therefore wait on God in this Ordinance ; Oh look not upon it as weak and beggarly Elements as some ignorantly and blasphemously call all Ordinances : make them not a matter of Ceremony and Formality, but prepare for them and use them conscientiously, and you shall see the sweet effect thereof.

3. Improve the seals of the Covenant, both Baptism and the Lords Supper ; Circumcision is called the seal of the righteousness of faith, because that sweet Evangelical priviledge, or marrow of the Gospel-covenant is signified, sealed and exhibited in that Ordinance ; Oh Christians, understand and improve that sweet Ordinance of Baptism, it would be a spring of sweetness and satisfaction to your doubting, fainting spirits : and then for the Lords Supper ; herein Christs Body and Blood are particularly applied to us, to become our own,

1 Cor. 10.

16.

C. 11. 24.

yea,

yea, verily and really, (though not corporally, but spiritually) exhibited to every worthy receiver, and hence resulteth spiritual joy, solace and satisfaction, as in the Pascheover in *Hezekiah's* days, *they kept the feast with gladness and there was joy in Jerusalem.* 2 Chron. 30. 21, 26. But be sure you examine your selves, prepare your hearts, excite your Graces, understand the Covenant, apply these blessed mysteries to your own souls, open your hearts by Meditation that the King of glory may come in, stir up your souls to draw near to God, and he will draw near to you ; you'l see Christ Crucified before you ; you'l enjoy a blessed feast of fat things, that will nourish and comfort your pining souls ; here you'l feel pleasant Apples and sweet flagons of the Wine of his special love to stay you up and support your hearts in the day of your affliction, and sad desertion ; and if you cannot enjoy that refreshing Ordinance, yet reflect upon your former enjoyments, and meditate upon your Crucified Redeemer, and represent his bruised body and effused blood to your selves, and in due time you'l cry out with *Thomas, my Lord and my God.* Gal. 3. 1.

4. Ply the Throne of Grace in Prayer ; say as *David*, *Psal. 35. 3. O Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation :* God hath promised to make his people joyful in the house (or duty) of Prayer ; Saints have found by experience the sweet and satisfying fruit of a serious wrestling with God ; thus *David,* Isa. 56. 7.

David, Psal. 31. 16. *make thy face to shine upon thy servant*; and ver. 21. *he breaks out in thankfulness for an answer, Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong City.* Yea, Christ himself commands us to ask that we may receive that our joy may be full, *Joh. 16. 24.* and is not a clear evidence of our interest in the Covenant, and the mercies of it worth asking? therefore plead with God; tell him thou preferrest Covenant-mercies above worldly enjoyments; and that thou wouldst rather have these mercies made sure to thee than to have a lease of thy life; for his

Psal. 63. 3. loving-kindness is better than life: tell him the joy of the Lord is thy strength, and how much it will tend to thy furtherance in his service if he will lift up the light of his Countenance on thy soul: tell him he hath granted comfortable assurance to many souls, and thou needest it as well as they; thou art an humble suitor at the Gates of mercy, and art resolved not to let him go, except he bless thee: yet once again, tell him, it is no more then he hath promised in his word, and Christ hath purchased by his blood; and therefore it is no arrogancy for thee to crave or expect, and when thou hast been pleading, conclude with

Mark 9. 24. that poor man, Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief, and he will say, *according to thy faith be it unto thee.*

5. Walk close with God, as that is one of the mercies of the Covenant, so 'tis an evidence

evidence of our interest in the Covenant, and 'tis a notable means of obtaining and maintaining assurance, Psal. 50. 23. *to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God*: close-walkers have many choice discoveries; Oh the peace that such have as keep Gods commandments! Oh the sweet refreshment which results from a lively obedience! *the work of righteousness is peace, the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever,* Isa. 32. 17. if you keep constantly in the fear of God, he will discover to you the secrets of his Covenant, he will cause the Sun of righteousness to arise upon you; if you keep his Commandments, you shall have a comforter, and he will manifest himself to you. But if you grow careless, and remiss in your walking, and step aside to any gross sin, no wonder if you have little assurance of these Covenant-mercies; for these do separate betwixt you and your God, you and comfort; this obscured Davids interest in God, and his unsuitable Acts cost him many a tear, and sad thoughts of heart, which made him cry out of broken bones, and bitterly groan out his sad complaints for the want of the joy of Gods salvation: yea, for one act of sloth and security, the Church lost the sweet sense of divine love, Cant. 5. 26. Oh take heed of sin, it is like a filthy vapour rising out of the soul, that causeth a mist, and a thick mist between God and us, as will keep the

Psal. 119.
165.

Psal. 25. 14.
Mat. 4. 2.
Joh. 14. 15,
16. v. 21.

the light of his countenance from shining upon us, it begets jealousies, suspicions and uncomfortable fears in the soul whether God be ours or no, and therefore take heed of sin and walk humbly with God.

6. Be much in self-observation : some have an interest in the Covenant, but know it not for want of self-discovery ; therefore it were a good work to consider both your hearts and ways ; indeed the heart is deceitful, but you should take the candle of the Word in the hand of Conscience, and deal impartially with your hearts ; seek into the obscure corners thereof, and it's possible in some nook or other you'll find a Covenant-mercy ; canst thou not say as *Peter* in *Joh 21 17.* sincerity, *thou knowest that I love thee ?* or *Ish. 38. 3.* with *Hezekiah*, that *you have walkt before God in uprightness* ; dost thou not find in thy heart a care to please God fear to offend him, desire to enjoy him, hatred of sin, love to the saints, poverty of spirit, despising the World, and low thoughts of thy best duty ? well now a sound search, and clear discovery of the frame of your spirits will be a notable way to assure to your selves your interest in these Covenant-mercies, and so proving your selves, your rejoycing and satisfaction shall be from your selves : if thou canst but find one saving Grace in thy heart in truth, thou maist gather some evidence thence, and Gods Children have taken comfort in their sincere love to the Brethren,

Gal. 6. 4.
Prov. 14.
14.

thens when they have have scarce discern-
ed any other grace, and so have assured
their hearts before God that they were of
the truth, see 1 John 3. 18, 19. there's ne-
ver a good work done, if it be right for
principle, rule, and end, but it will help us
to a discovery of our state, that our work
is wrought in God, Joh. 3. 21. therefore
let's be willing to come to the light, and try
our hearts and acts; so may we attain as-
surance of our interest.

7. Reflect upon, and recollect your former
experiences, this was *David's* usual method,
to assure his heart of the truth of Grace,
and his interest in God, Psal. 77. 10. *I will*
remember the years of the right hand of the most
high; days of old; his songs in the night;
this course took *Job* and many other
saints, and the Apostle bids the believing
Hebrews *call to remembrance the former days,*
in which after they were illuminated, they
endured a great fight of afflictions, Heb.
10. 32. and this was in order to the re-
covery of Gods smiles, and the sence of his
love: you'l say; what am I better for re-
membring what goodness was in me in
time past, which I am now fallen from,
and have lost? I answer, much, every
way, chiefly, because these mercies of the
Covenant are sure mercies, and though they
may be obscured, yet never abolished, *where*
God loves once, he loves to the end, Joh.
13. 1. the bud and blossom of comfort may
be nipt, but the root of the matter and in-

corruptible

Psal 77. 6.

Psal. 143.

5, 6.

Job 23. 11,

12.

Job 19. 28.

1 Pet 1. 23.

corruptible seed remains in the heart; a man in a swoon hath life though possibly 'tis not discernable to himself or others; grace may be hid, yet alive, as the sap returns into the root in Winter; want of comfortable sense and feeling is not a loss of Grace, in this case search your records, and see if you cannot find some manifestations of God to your souls in former times: I have heard of a godly Woman, who was wont to write down how God dealt with her heart, and time, place, manner of her communion with God; a time of desiruction came, the comforts and counsels of Ministers, friends were in vain; a good man gets her Book, shews it under her own hand, which she could not deny, clears the immutable love of God, plies her with it, drives the nail home, and thereby she recovered her assurance; thus may you, therefore recollect experiences.

8. Strengthen every grace; the greater any thing is, the more is is discernable; little Grace is not so soon discovered as much Grace; a greater measure of the Graces of the spirit carryes a beauty and lustre along with it, and hath a self-evidencing testimony of the souls sincerity. Christians, do you add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, Godliness, brotherly-kindness, charity; for if these things be in you and abound, you shall both be fruitful, and they will help you

You to clear up your calling and election,
 2 Pet. 1. 5—10. these resemble the soul
 to God, and the more God-like a Christi-
 an grows, the more clear will he be in
 point of state; Saints of the greatest mag-
 nitude are usually more free from doubt-
 ings, whiles sincere, (yet weak believers)
 are much pestered with jealousies and mis-
 givings; the more you get of these sure
 mercies into your hearts, the more sure
 you are of your interest in them; the faster
 hold you have of God, the surer you'll be,
 you have indeed hold of him; every step to-
 wards *Zion* will add new strength, stability
 and satisfaction to the holy Pilgrim: en-
 crease Repentance, and you increase assu-
 rance of the remission of sins, increase faith,
 and that brings on assurance of faith;
 strengthen hope, and you settle your An-
 chor; grow in love to God and his way,
 courage and zeal for God, humility and
 self-denial, and hereby shall you clear up
 your own souls and others, that these
 mercies of the Covenant belong to you,
 for so saith the Apostle, *the Lord make you*
to increase and abound in love—— to
the end he may stablish your hearts unblame-
able in holiness before God, 1 Thes. 3. 12, 13.
 if you have more Grace, you may probably
 have more comfort.

9. Lay the stress of your souls upon
 free-grace, the more you mix any conceits
 of your own righteousness, the more you'll
 stagger, and be disconsolate, let free-grace
 be

be your foundation, and build upon nothing in your selves, for your best graces, duties, excellencies are imperfect and can afford you little solid satisfaction. Let Jesus Christ be all in all to you, be you nothing at all in your selves. Oh God loves to see a poor trembling soul despairing of any thing in it self, accounting the World as loss and dross, flying into the out-stretched arms of free-grace, casting it self down at his feet, and resolving to venture all upon an all-sufficient Saviour, and though at present it walk in darkness, yet it will cast

Isa. 50. 10. Anchor in the dark, *and trust in the name of the Lord*; you shall see in due time the mists shall be dispelled, and the souls state cleared, and the troubled heart fully satisfied;

See Psal. 33. 20, 22. thus *David* made account to recover the light of Gods countenance, and banish disquieting thoughts, even by trusting in God, Psal. 45. 5, 12. mercy will answer all your doubts and scruples; mercy will suit your necessity, mercy will revive and rejoyce troubled spirits; therefore, poor doubting soul, though thou canst find no goodness in thy self, therefore lookest on thy self as utterly unworthy, yea, incapable of interest in Covenant-mercies, yet hope in Gods mercy; let no mud of thy duties mix with the pure stream of free, undeserved mercy, and as that will carry thy soul apace to the Ocean of glory; so it will bring many sweet refreshing streams of joy and peace into thy heart: we have instances of many

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in the word that judged themselves most unworthy of good, as in themselves, yet expected and received, both mercy and assurance thereof for mercies sake; as *Centurion, Woman of Canaan*, and others, because as mercy is free, so these Covenant-mercies are purchased and ensured by Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant, and therefore though there be no goodness in the poor soul, to procure these mercies, yet there is enough in their surety, and as their sins are made over to him, so what good is in Christ, is made over to the believing soul; 1 Cor. 1. 30. here is the marrow of the Gospel. Yea farther, the less goodness an humbled sinner finds in himself, the greater evidence hath he that these mercies belong to him, because he finds eyes such very persons invited and received: yea humility, self-denial and poverty of spirit are mercies of the Covenant, and do evidence interest.

10. Be much in the duties of thankfulness and cheerfulness, give God praise, and God will give you more grounds of praise; bury not his mercies in the grave of forgetfulness, especially bless him for Covenant-mercies: Alas, saith the soul, if I were sure I had an interest in these Covenant-mercies, then I could sing to Gods praise, and be very thankful; but how can I praise God for that which I question whether it belong to me, yea or no: I Answer, thou must bless God that there are such mercies

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Mat. 8. 8.

15. 27.

1sa. 55. 1.

Mat. 5. 3.

Rom. 4. 5.

in store for poor sinners, and that any poor souls have obtained an interest therein, and are carryed to Heaven thereby, bless God that you are under a call and capacity to enjoy these Covenant-mercies, that God hath not excluded, but included you in the universal tender of it; yea, consider if you have not cause to bless God that he hath been dealing with your hearts in such a manner as he is wont to do with such souls as he brings into Covenant with himself; hath he not humbled, broken, brought your souls off your own bottoms; let you see a vanity in the World, the excellency and necessity of Christ? caused longings and pantings in your souls after these mercies? and doth not all this deserve your thankfulness? but know further, that thankfulness for what you have is a most effectual way to clear up your title and to beget assurance, praise raiseth the souls faculties to an high pitch of joy and comfort; it is like *David's* harp to banish away the evil spirit of disquietness or discouragement:

Psal. 65. 1. your praise should wait for God, and you'll
Isa. 30. 18. find God waiting to be gracious to you; usually a thankful heart is a chearful heart: you may sing your selves out of your sorrows, as *David* did frequently: he made a song of these mercies of the Covenant, even then when he could find little comfort in, or benefit by, these Covenant-mercies in many regards: See *Psal.* 89. 1. with *ver.* 38. *ad finem*: thus do you, Christians, sing your
 selves

selves into this blessed sleep, and soul-tranquility: 'tis the fault of doubting souls, that they pore all upon their sins, and forget their mercies, they think they can never be sufficiently bathed in the tears of repentance, and torment their hearts with doubtful thoughts, but consider not that a thankful commemoration of mercies is as well their duty as mourning and humiliation; yea, 'tis a sweet, heart-cheering, God-pleasing duty; therefore let Christians be much in this duty as a means of assurance: I shall add a word or two to all of us to press after a particular assurance of our interest in these mercies of the Covenant.

1. Christians may be assured of their interest; we are commanded to make it sure, many good souls have arrived to a Plerophory or full assurance; experience proves the truth of this, God himself hath promised joy and comfort to such as *ask it*, 'tis the great office of the spirit to *seal up souls to the day of redemption*; Yea the Scriptures were written to promote our comfort and assurance, seals of the Covenant instituted Ordinances and Ministers appointed for this very end? and shall we slight this infinite Condescension of God who is so forward to help us? shall we use no means or endeavours to ensure these mercies to our souls? Oh ingrateful wretches! if it were a thing unattainable, we might be daunted; but how many gracious souls do we see and hear of, that do walk in the light of

2 Pet. 1. 10.

Joh. 16. 24.

Eph. 1. 13.

Rom. 15. 4.

'Tis promised.

See Isa.

60. 16.

Saints have

attained to

it. Job. 19.

25.

Psal. 63. 1.

Gal. 2. 20.

1 Joh. 3. 14.

1. 19.

Cant. 2. 16.

Isa. 43. 24.

25.

Gods Countenance, and triumph over all opposition in the sense of Gods love! and one great Reason why many of us are so full of doubts is our neglect of Gods appointed means for the obtaining of assurance, for if it be attainable in the use of ordinary means, we sin exceedingly against God and our own souls in neglecting those means of assurance.

2. You cannot evidence your truth of grace, or title to Covenant-mercies unless you use Gods appointed means to obtain assurance; it's an ill sign of a graceless heart to nourish doubtings and distrusts, and then to come in with such pleas as these; true faith is accompanied with doubtings, he that doubts not, doth not believe; a doubting faith is a good faith; let me have doubts and fears, I dare not be too confident, lest I presume. But I must tell thee soul, a doubting faith is but a weak faith, and a Christian ought *to be strong in faith*, and make a progress to a full degree and proficiency in grace and endeavour to arrive to a plerophory, and full assurance, for this is the nature of grace to be pressing after perfection, and *go from faith to faith*, even from a faith of adherence to a faith of evidence and assurance; yea let such know this that slight means of assurance, you live in a constant neglect of a known duty, in disobedience to a flat command, *Heb. 6. 11. and we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope*

Rom. 4. 20.

Rom. 1. 17.

unto the end, q. d. if your faith and hope be of the right stamp, as it may seem to be, it will be working off all doubtings, anxious thoughts and distrusting fears, and move to a further degree of confidence and assurance : else you may suspect the truth of it.

3. You cannot assure your selves of creature enjoyments a day to an end, nor yet of immunity from crosses, and if you have not assurance of these sure mercies, what have you to bear up your hearts in an evil day ? we little know what shaking times may come, that may pluck from you whatever you account dear ; and if you have not something above, oh the sad confusions that will seize upon you ! but assurance of an interest in the God of Heaven, and the good things of the Covenant will be a guard to free your hearts from those numerous Armies of tormenting fears that will beset you ; this will be a cordial to drive away sick and swooning qualmes from your troubled spirits ; assurance of Gods love will fortifie your hearts against the fierce assaults of men and devils, Psal. 27. 1. *the Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I fear ?* destroying Angels shall not come near any persons that are sprinkled with Christs blood, and have the mourners mark, a day of danger, horror, confusion may overtake us in the Nation, in which we may be stript naked of all our enjoyments, surely then assurance of our interest in the best riches

Exod. 12.
23.
Ezek. 9. 6.

in the World will stand us in stead, and when all things else fail these will abide with us. But,

4. Consider the great advantages of assurance, I can but name them. 1. It will assure us that we shall want nothing that's good for us, *if he have given us Christ, then will he give us all good things*, Rom. 8. 32. 2. It gives a sweet relish to every comfort of life, *delight in Gods great goodness*, Neh. 9. 25. 3. It will sweeten the bitterest cup of affliction, Mat. 9. 2. 4. It gives boldness to the Throne of Grace, Heb. 10. 22. *μετὰ παρρησίας*, i. e. with a liberty to say what we list, if according to his will, and he will hear us. 5. Assurance helps the soul to despise the World; he that knows he is clothed with the Sun can trample the Moon under his feet, see Heb. 10. 34. 6. It strengthens against the censures and reproaches of men, no matter what men say when God acquits, Rom. 8. 33, 34. our Conscience tells us we are not the men we are represented to be. 7. It sweetens the reading of the Word, and receiving of the Sacraments, these promises, seals, blood of the Covenant are mine; precepts, threatenings, all things his, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. 8. It enlargeth the soul in praise and thanksgiving; hence those *Hallelujahs* in Heaven; the more assurance, the more thankfulness, Psal. 103. 1, 2, 3. 9. It commendeth Religion to others, makes Gods ways lovely, *Ob taste and see, come and I will shew you what be* bath

1 Pet. 4.
14, 16.

what he hath done for my soul, ingageth many, *Psal.* 142. 7. 10. It helpeth on repentance, makes Godly sorrow more kindly, Evangelical; a love-look from Christ melts *Peters* heart; this Sun dissolves frozen souls, *Ezek.* 16. 63. 11. It engageth a soul against sin; appearances of God are cords of love, which are strongest to an ingenuous spirit, *Rom.* 6. 1, 2. 12. Assurance animates our performances, and obedience; is any thing too much to do for God? yea, my God deserves all I am, have, his command's are not grievous, 1 *Joh.* 3. 5. 13. It deadens the heart to needless disputes and Controversies, it settles the heart in the truth, and fortifies it against the subtilties of seducing spirits, for *Gods Law is in their hearts*, *Heb.* 13. 9. 14. It representeth the glory of Heaven, is some blessed embleme of a souls bathing it self in these Rivers of pleasure that are at Gods right hand, divine embraces, a corner of Heaven, a *Pisgah-sight of Canaan*. 15. It sweeteneth the King of terrors, and plucks out the sting of death; so that a gracious soul assured of Gods love can triumph with *Paul* over this conquered enemy, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. and indeed none but an assured Christian can look death in the face without horroure and amazement: ruffling gallants may be prodigal of their lives, who are far from any capacity of obtaining assurance, but those are liker Bruits than men, that are guided by sence, not

by reason, and consider not that their souls are immortal, and that they are entering into Eternity at death, but these have drowned themselves in sensuality, and consider not what they do, but 'tis only the Christian that's upon good grounds assured of his good estate, that can in cold blood adventure upon death, yea be willing to dye, yea desire *to be dissolved and be with Christ.*

I have but hinted at these things, because 'tis an ordinary subject wherein many have done worthily to promote endeavours to obtain assurance.

Sirs, what say you to these things? is not assurance of interest in Covenant-mercies worth labouring for? can you let these things lye without clearing your title? doth not the new creature breathe after it? doth not a rational soul desire it? do not all wicked men catch after a certainty, and frame to themselves some kind of certainty? do not worldlings take care to secure their Lands, Goods, Estates? shall they require Bonds, Seals, Oaths, Sureties, and yet account all this too little, and shall we account any thing too much to secure these sweet mercies without which we are undone for ever? Oh let nothing hinder your endeavours this way; let no objections make you delay or be discouraged; let not Satan deter you, or the Worlds conceits make you slight it as unattainable, nor a slothful unbelieving heart obstruct your diligence in
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this great and weighty case ; who would live at such uncertainties as the most do ? who would have his life to hang in doubt in a meer conjecture ? especially when it is in this great case of Conscience, whether the soul must live in Heaven or Hell ? but most of all considering that our very lives are so uncertain that the next moment we may step into Eternity ; the God of Heaven awake the Saints of God who have indeed an interest in these mercies to use all means to know they have an interest therein, that they may know they are of the truth, and assure their hearts before him, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Joh. 3. 19.*

CHAP. XIII.

III. **T**HE third head of Directions is this, In what cases may a Covenanted soul make use of, or improve these sure mercies of *David*?

In answer to this I shall propound these seven cases wherein a gracious soul may and must have recourse to these Covenant-mercies.

I. In case of dissettling suggestions to Atheism or unbelief, when reason begins to dispute the being of God, or the truth of Scriptures, and shakes our confidence, or strikes at the foundation, then study and improve these sure undoubted mercies, and lean upon Divine Authority, if God speak it, the thing is out of doubt, his [*ipse dixit*] is beyond all demonstrations; Divines distinguish of maxims in Divinity, some whereof are mixtly Divine, others are meerly Divine; in truths of the former sort reason may serve in the second place; first they are believed, then understood, as a man believes the immortality of the soul, then he begins to take up the same from reason, only reason must not here come before faith, but know her place; for if she should offer to go before as an Usher to make way for faith, we should never believe; therefore Schoolmen say, Reasons going before Faith, weakens Faith,

Primo creduntur, & postea intelliguntur.

Rationes precedentes minuant fidem, sed rationes subsequentes augent fidem.

faith, but reasons coming after faith strengthens it ; so that reason makes not the matter more sure [*ex parte veritatis distantis*] in respect of God the speaker, [*sed ex parte intellectus dissentientis*] in respect of the weakness of our understanding.

See *Wren's*
Portrait of
Imag. Ep. to
Read.

But now in things that are meerly Divine, and fall directly under faith, as the Myserie of the Trinity of Incarnation, reason hath nothing to do but admire those hid mysteries that she can never reach unto. Oh take heed of doubting or unbelief: Gospel-mysteries are without all Controversie ; here thy way is not to dispute but believe ; Gods Word is more than all the protestations, asseverations, bonds or obligations of all the men in the World ; Consider what's said in the Doctrinal part, and give your full assent to all revealed truths : you may better believe God than your senses : Senses may deceive us ; God cannot, many men are brutish, will believe nothing but what is within the reach of sense ; they are meer Sadduces about spirits and spiritual things ; but sirs, will you believe nothing but what you see ? then surely you'll not believe that there is such a City as *Rome* or *London* because you have not seen them. But let me tell you that that tempting spirit who perswades you now to doubt of the being of God, and the reality of Divine things, cannot doubt thereof himself ; for he to his cost feels the truth thereof, though
without

Non est dis-
putatio aut
dubitatio
post Evan-
gelium reve-
latum.

without any comfortable interest therein
the Devil believes and trembles, Jam. 2. 19.
O therefore, silence all unbelieving and
disputing thoughts, doubt not after these
clear revelations and demonstrations : ad-
mit not this grand Gospel-sin of unbelief;
this damning infidelity, but cry out as the
poor man, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbel-*
ief, Mark 9. 24.

2. In case of guilt upon the Conscience
and fears of acceptance, then have recourse
to these sure mercies of *David*, these are
mercies, therefore mercy is working to-
wards a poor sinner in misery, they are
made sure by Christ to all Heirs of Pro-
mise, and though thou canst not sensibly ap-
prehend him by faith, at some times, yet
he can powerfully comprehend thee ;
what though thy sins be many, yet mercy
answers all demerits ; 'tis not only mer-
cy, but mercies ; multitudes of tender
mercies ; he is plenteous in mercy, and
will abundantly pardon ; he doth not
consult thy fitness, but his free-grace ; come
then, poor guilty sinner, venture thy
weary soul upon these sure mercies ; he is
meeting thee half way (as the Prodigals
Father) and ready to fall upon thy neck,
his bowels are yearning towards thy sin-
ning soul, he is very free and liberal in
distributing ; be not thou coy and shy
in entertaining these sure mercies, he
waits to be gracious, do thou bid his
gracious tenders welcome. Yea, but saith
the

the troubled soul, though there be mercies, yet I question whether they belong to me ; I know they are sure to some, but 'tis a great question whether I be of that number ; and I reply, why not to thee ? what Scripture or reason hast thou to suspect that thou art excluded ? the grant is in general terms, Jesus Christ came to seek and save what was lost, and thou art lost, and feelest thy self to be lost, doth not he bid weary souls come to him ? if thou wert righteous, thou mightest justly fear thou mightest go without him, but thou saist thou art a sinner, and thou knowest he *came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance* ; thou art a sinner, a great sinner : yea, chiefest of sinners, and did not *Paul* look upon himself as such, and yet he obtained mercy ; and consider soul if thou hast no interest in these mercies, whence then are all those fears, doubts, jealousies, complaints, enquiries ? whence are these sad and dreadful apprehensions of thy sin and misery ? these convictions of the nothingness of thy duties, and sufficiency of mercies only to relieve thy perishing soul ? whence are those meltings of heart for offending bowels of mercy ? and strugglings against sin from the sense of mercy ? what mean those prayers and tears, those tossings of thy soul betwixt hopes and fears about thy interest in mercy ? and yet thou who thus complaineest, wouldst not give up thy title or quit thy claim to these
Covenant

Covenant-mercies for a full possession of all the common mercies in the World; thou art not content without these, thy enquiry is chiefly after these, thy expectation is most from, and dependance most upon, these Covenant-mercies, these and these alone are thy salvation and desire. But suppose the worst, that thy soul hath no interest as yet in these, why shouldst thou despair of future interest? shouldst thou not rather put it out of doubt by a present application thereof by actual believing? stand out, stand off no longer, take Christ upon his own terms, give up thy self to him, give him the glory of believing, remember all the ways the Lord hath taken to assure thee of these mercies, so that unbelief is the

Joh. 3. 19. most unreasonable sin in the World; this is the great damning sin, say not with *Cain*, thy sins are greater than can be forgiven, for thou lyest in saying so; is not the mercy of an infinite God beyond the demerits of a finite creature? nay further, thou givest God the lye who is truth it self, he saith, there's life for dead condemned sinners in his Son, thou saist no, but I have been to seek, and I want life, but there's none for me; yes, yes, soul, there's life enough for thee, grace abounds, and you may have this life in abundance, only shut not out your selves by unbelief, but come to him and he will in no wise cast you off, for he is ready to forgive your iniquities, and give you these sure mercies.

1 Joh. 5.
10, 11.

3. In case of persecutions, afflictions, temptation from Satan, the World, or any other ways, you may then improve these Covenant-mercies, and find abundance of sweetness, solace and satisfaction therein; were it not for these the soul of a child of God would sink under his pressures; how often doth *David* profess that he had perished in his affliction, did not Gods word of promise support him; a Covenant-word will lift up the soul from the lowest depth, a Covenanted God will encourage a Saint in the greatest straits; there is a Divine art in a Christians improving this stock to his best advantage, and affliction is a proper season to make use thereof; as suppose a man be in poverty there's enough in the Covenant to make him rich, if in disgrace, Covenant-mercies make him honourable, if sick, one Covenant-mercy (even pardon of sin) will make him sound, if in Prison, Covenant-mercies set him at liberty, if hungry or thirsty, why, Covenant-mercies are meat and drink to him, if deprived of relations, still Covenant-mercy makes up that loss, and lets the soul see better relations in Heaven. Oh Christians, your case can never be forlorn, as long as you have such rich mercies of the Covenant to support and supply you, let all the men of earth set themselves against you, they can but storm the out-works, they can never surprize your main Fort, or rob you of your best goods; these mercies of the

Psal. 119.

Isa. 33.

Dei hominem & cultorem Dei subnixum

spei veritate & fidei stabilitate fundatum, negat mundi huius & seculi inconstantibus commoveri.

vid. Cypr.

tractat.

cont. De-

metr. p.

Covenant 273.

Covenant which are made sure to you by a Covenant of salt ; oh hug and embrace these mercies in such a time as this, when trade decays, your stock is safe ; in a plundering time none can pluck away your treasure and estate ; you have something that all the Devils in Hell, and Men on Earth cannot deprive you of, troubles will but knock these mercies into your breasts more firmly and feelingly then deprive you of them, or render you suspicious of your interest in them, for these are seasons where-

Gen. 28. 13. the soul ; *Jacob's* sad and solitary journey was attended with the choicest heart-reviving discoveries ; Heaven was opened,

Act. 7. 55. and God shined upon blessed *Stephen's* soul through a shower of Stones. Oh Christians, 'tis worth a World to have interest in God in the day of affliction ; and 'tis your great work in such a day to bear up your hearts with what you have in the Covenant of grace : take heed of discontented murmurings under any tryals, since you have a God that can and will be all in all to your souls in the want of all comforts and over-flowing of sorrows.

4. You may improve these Covenant-mercies in a day of spiritual dearth, in the famine of the Word, which is the saddest judgement, when Means, Ordinances fail, and the soul is in great danger of pining, then 'tis both safe and sweet to suck growth and strength from the spring-head, even
from

from God in a Covenant-way, these mercies nourish the languishing soul in a famishing season, Isa. 41. 17, 18. *when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them, I will open Rivers in high places, and Fountains in the midst of the Valleys, I will make the Wilderness a Pool of water, and streams in the Desert, and dry Land springs of Water.* Oh blessed are Covenanted souls, they have meat to eat others know not of, hidden Manna, God hath ways to convey Marrow and Fatness into their souls when their ordinary provision is kept from them. I Read of a man, that was condemned to starve to death in Prison, his Daughter getting leave to visit him once a day, yet not permitted to bring food, notwithstanding preserved his life a long time by the Milk which he sucked out of her Breasts. Oh how doth God preserve the souls of his Children in Prisons, by that good nourishment they suck from God in the breasts of the Promises! he keeps them alive in famine, bread shall be given them, their waters shall be sure, yea he makes affliction and adversity both bread and water, wholesome food, therefore called in Scripture, *the bread of adversity and water of affliction*, because souls are bravely nourished thereby, Ordinances may for a season be removed, but influences of

Isa 33. 16.

Isa. 30. 20.

Q

grace

grace are still conveyed, grace is supported, the soul supplied, as long as the spring remains free for a Christians access he shall be provided for, though the Chancel be stoppt, streams cut off, and outward means much obstructed: therefore, Christians, when the word of the Lord is precious, and there is little open vision, make your addresses immediately to God, see what he will speak to your souls; own him in Covenant-relation, lay your souls at his feet, and tell him that you are cast in a thirsty Wilderness; your graces are withering, and hearts failing, tell him you can scarce meet with an instrument to receive a word of council or comfort from, but ask him if he cannot supply without as well as by the means; tell him, he sometimes stops the Conduit that he may convince us where our refreshment lyes, and whither we must have recourse for fresh supplies; tell him when you enjoyed the means, they could not work without him, and now you want them he can work without them, though he hath tyed us to the means, yet he hath not tyed himself to them; tell him once again that the more immediate his Conveyances are, the more evidential they are, and the sweeter emblems of Heaven.

5. In your backslidings and fears of apostacy, then, oh then improve these mercies of the new Covenant ; you fall and miscarry and lose your hold of God, but God hath hold of you ; you dare not venture to approach to him again, but he calls and tells you he will heal your backsliding, will not cause his anger to fall upon you, because he is married to you, and he hates putting away ; the mercies of the Covenant depend not on your mutable wills, but upon everlasting love, your souls are carryed to Heaven in the Chariot of the Covenant which moves upon the solid Axle-tree of free-grace, which as it was not procured, so is it not continued by your merits, or goodness ; 'tis true if you had carryed the matter so towards men as you have done to God, you might expect an heavy sentence, but these are the sure mercies of an infinite God ; the Covenant is made in Christ, and made good by Christ, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Amen*, the faithful and true witness is the Surety and Mediator of this blessed Covenant. Oh Christians, lay your stress here ; there's help laid upon one that is mighty to save, he can save to the uttermost pinch, he is good at this soul-saving work ; do not fear, he that begun this good work in your hearts will perfect it, you may be confident of it ; you shall be kept by the power of God through faith to salvation ; though you be very weak,

Jer. 3. 12.

13.

1 Pet. 1. 5.

Rom. 14. 4.

Jer. 31.

weak, yet he is able to make you stand; you shall not depart from him; omnipotency is engaged for you; act faith therefore upon the numerous and gracious promises of perseverance, though you have many *fightings without and fears within*, though you feel averseness to good, and a tendency to sin, wants and weaknesses, burdens and breaches, snares and sadness; yet lift up your hearts, you stand upon better terms with God than *Adam* in innocency, or the Angels in glory, who were not confirmed in their integrity, but are fallen by a dreadful apostacy; it were sad for poor believers, if their happiness did depend upon their mutable nature, or strongest resolutions; or if God should revoke his mercies, as often as they provoke his justice, but blessed be God for Jesus Christ, and the rest of the sure mercies of *David*; triumph in this, O ye Children of the promise, the Covenant wherein your souls are wrapped, is ordered in all things and sure; Heaven it self is engaged for you, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against you, none can pluck you out of his hands, who is the rock of Ages, in whom is everlasting strength; you may confidently make bold and blessed *Paul's* victorious challenge, *who shall separate us from the Love of God*, Rom. 8. 35. *ad finem*, though your internal motions be often like *Ezekiel's* wheel, intricate, confused and perplexed, as a wheel in a wheel,

grace

grace sweying one way, and flesh another, yet if you be joynd to the living Creatures, and united to Christ in the bond of the Covenant, you shall go streight on with constancy and uniformity till your souls arrive at glory : these mercies are not for a day, or week, or month or year, but they run parallel with the life of God and line of eternity, for *with everlasting mercies, he will have compassion on thee*, Isa. 54: 7, 8.

6. In case of desertions, and Gods withdrawings from him, the soul may and must improve these sure mercies of *David*; now desertions are ordinarily distinguished into Gods withdrawing.

1. His quickning.
2. His comforting presence from the soul, in both these cases the soul may improve them.

1. In case God suspend the gracious influences of his spirit, and the heart be shut up under deadness, hardness, unbelief, distractions, and the poor Christian cannot feel those lively springings of the graces of the Covenant in his heart. then let him have recourse to the promise wherein God hath engaged himself to give a soft heart, a new spirit, faith, love, repentance, the spirit of prayer, &c. all habits of grace, the lively exercise of grace, assisting grace, quickning, enlarging, moving melting manifestations are bound up in this Gospel-covenant; hence it is, that when *David* finds his heart dull and out of frame; he

ver. 107.

runs to God and cries out, *my soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken me according to thy word,* Psal. 119. 25. and he goes often over with that phrase, which imports, that David lay under the sense of some promise; that God had made for the quickning of his heart, when it was out of frame, and accordingly he recounts the gracious influences of Gods spirit, and professeth that he will never forget his precepts, because by them he had quickned him, *ver. 93.* thus let dead hearts lay themselves at Christs feet, and plead in this manner, Lord my heart is exceeding dull and distracted; I feel not those enlarging, melting influences which thy Saints have met with, but are they not main material mercies of the Covenant; dost thou not promise a spirit of illumination, conviction, humiliation? is not holiness of heart and life a main branch of it? dost thou not promise therein to write thy Law in my heart? to give me oneness of heart, to put thy fear within me, to subdue my corruptions, to help my infirmities in prayer? now Lord, these are the mercies my soul wants and waits for, fill my soul with these warming influences, revive thy work of grace in my soul, draw out my heart towards thee, enlarge my affections to thee, repair thine image, draw out grace into lively exercise; doth not that sweet word intend such a mercy when thou

Ezek. 36.

26. saist, thou wilt not only give a new heart,
but

but put a new spirit within me, to make my soul lively, active, and spiritual in duties and motions? dear Lord, am not I a Covenanted soul? and are not these Covenant-mercies? why then, my God, dost thou thus harden my heart from thy fear? why dost thou leave me in all this deadness and distraction? remember thy word unto thy servant in which thou hast caused me to hope, and in which thou hast helped me to plead; oh quicken my dull heart, according to thy word: thus improve these mercies in case of deadness.

2. In case of sadness and disconsolateness, and the hidings of Gods face from a troubled drooping spirit; Oh then make much use of these Covenant-mercies, both as they are mercies and as they are sure mercies, they are as free and as firm as ever; if you see nothing but wickedness and wretchedness in your selves, remember mercy prevents you; if you see nothing but justice and frowns in Gods face, remember his faithfulness ingageth him; he is faithful, he cannot deny himself, would he love thee so as to make thee his, and will he not now love thee as his Child? consider, the Covenant is certain, though there be a present suspension, thy union to Christ is secured, though actual Communion be intercepted, yea real unnecessary Communion is continued, though sensible manifestations be obscured: for observe it, the soul holds Communion with Christ by

that which desertions cannot hinder ; salvation may be there, though the joy of that salvation be gone, Covenant-relation may continue without comfortable satisfaction, *why hast thou forsaken me ?* (saith *Psalm 51. 8.* Christ and *David* his Type) yet my God still. Christians, you are not to trust to present feelings ; *David* doth not say, make me to feel, but hear joy and gladness, saith one, because sense and feeling is of no worth of it self, except first we hear it in a promise, that's a fancy that's felt and not heard from God, and we are to build upon a word of promise, even when we want the feeling of comfort ; and 'tis not safe altogether to lean upon former experiences only, though these are good secondary helps, yet our primary and Principal foundation is God in a Promise, as our God in Covenant ; let a dark and troubled spirit read, study, and practise that choice instruction, *Isa 50. 10. trust in the name of the Lord, there's enough in Gods name to answer all doubts*, read it, *Exod. 34. 5, 6* — mercy there answers to our misery, grace to our undeserving, long-suffering to our continued apostacy, goodness answers our vileness, truth and faithfulness answers to our Covenant-breach and falshood ; God keeps Covenant, though we break it, yea, God keeps Covenant with us though we are apt to think he breaks it ; *David* thought Gods mercy was clean gone, and that his Promise failed for evermore, but he

he is convinced at last that that apprehension was his infirmity, *Psal. 77. 8, 9, 10.* therefore let a clouded soul in its blackest desertions lift up his eyes and heart to these sure mercies, and ponder thus; 'tis true my soul is dark, and God withdraws, it is a night of great affliction, but was it never day with thee, O my soul? hath not the blessed day-star of grace risen in thy heart? hath not God united thee to Jesus Christ? did he never give thee the earnest of his Spirit? didst thou never feel the stirrings of its graces, or the stealing of its comforts? reflect upon thy former state, or rather study the freeness and the fulness of Gospel-grace; what though I be without any sensible feelings of Gods grace, or shinings of his face? is not my life sometimes hid with Christ in God, even from mine own eyes as well as from others? may not the Sun be under a Cloud? shall I say my Father doth not love me, because he doth not always dandle me upon his knee, and evidence his love to me in sweet embraces? I am resolved to cleave unto him though he kill me, and to believe in him though I cannot see him, I will venture my weary soul upon his free-grace in Christ; the Covenant is firm, its mercies are sure, there's hope in the God of *Israel*; it may be he will cast a propitious aspect on a weary soul, however I am resolved to lye at his feet, and act assiance and dependance on his immutable promise, whether he ever shine up-

on my soul or no, this will bring a good issue.

7. The last case wherein a Christian is to improve these sure mercies of *David* is in the hour and power of death, when that grim Serjeant looks upon us with its ghastly face, and arrests us with its cold hand, then mercy will stand us in stead, and sure mercies will be our sweetest Cordial, these mercies pluck out the sting of death, perfume the grave, make way for the gracious soul to take its flight to glory, so that death is now become the Christians friend, and servant, rest and interest, conquest and Crown; the Apostle doth therefore reckon up death as one part of the Saints Inventory, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. *all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollo, or Cephas, or the World, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours*—— this is the fullest, longest, surest title; here's a sufficient enumeration, nothing can be wanting either in the mercies ensured, or manner of ensuring, or the duration, it's to all Eternity, and it's the best and clearest Tenure [*in capite*] in the head Christ; and 'tis both by Purchase and by Conquest, nothing is wanting to make these mercies sure for ever, for death which dissolves all other bonds of relation doth more firmly and closely joyn God and the gracious soul as a Portulac let them into the Fathers house; a divine Limbeck to prepare them for glory, and which calls to the believer say Father; in this life souls are but

but espoused to Christ, after death they are ^{2 Cor. 11. 2.} presented to him, and the marriage is consummated; here we are absent from our husband, while present in the body, but 'tis ^{2 Cor. 5. 6, 8.} more desirable to be absent from the body ^{ver. 1, 2.} and present with the Lord, and this is done ^{Phil. 1. 23.} by a dissolving of the earthly house of this Tabernacle; so that hereby death becomes a gain, and brings believers to their proper home; and why should we be afraid of a stingless Serpent, or helpful servant, that doth us the greatest kindness? why are believers afraid to dye? why do they not rather say with that good man, [*egredere anima egredere*] go forth my soul, go forth, and meet thy dearly beloved. But we need go no further to prove either the immortality of the soul, or the commodities of death than the subject we are upon, even these sure mercies of *David*, for they continue to *David* even when he is laid in the grave, therefore our Saviour proves the Resurrection from the Covenant with *Abraham*, ^{Numb. 18.} *Isaac* and *Jacob*, because it is a perpetual Co- ^{19.} venant, a Covenant of Salt, and thus runs ^{Mat. 22. 31.} the argument, God is the God of the living and not of the dead, therefore these Patriarchs are living and have an existence, because he hath made a Covenant with them; otherwise if these arise not, then must the Covenant of necessity cease, but the Covenant endures for ever, therefore those with whom he makes the Covenant must live for ever, since God calls himself their God, ^{Ex 3d. 3. 6.} even

even after they are laid in their graves ; therefore let Christians rest in hope, when they are laying down their heads in the grave, for the Scripture saith the righteous have hope in their death, the Covenant abides firm still ; the mercies thereof dye not when the body dyes ; the Heathens themselves saw this ; *Socrates* saith, *the Swan was Dedicated to Apollo, because she sung sweetly before her death* ; and the *Romans* when their great men dyed, and when their bodies were burnt to ashes, they caused an Eagle to fly and mount on high, to signifie that the soul was immortal ; and shall not the Children of Promise sing chearfully when their souls are ready to mount up to eternal mansions. I confess I am really ashamed when I read *Cicero*, that any that call themselves Christians, should dispute against the immortality of the soul, when he brings such arguments and Authors to assert it, but I am much more ashamed that any real Saints should shrink with fears of death, when even that poor Heathen hath spoken so much for the contempt of it. Let Christians learn something from Heathens. Take a few hints in the Marg.

Cicero

Tusc.

Quest.

lib. 1.

De contem-

nenda mor-

te : Maxi-

mum &

argumen-

tum est na-

turam ip-

sam de im-

mo talite

a-imorhem

tacitam judicare, quod omnibus curæ sunt, & maxime quidem que post mortem futura sint : Scit arbores que alteri securo prosint — quid procreatio liberorum, quid propagatio nominis, quid adoptiones filiorum, quid testamentorum diligentia, quid in sepulchro um monumenta, quid cetera significant, nisi vos futura etiam cogitare ? — Nemo unquam sine magna spe immortalitatis se pro patria offerret ad mortem : — and against fear of death

he

he adds ——— *Acherontia templa, alta orci. pallida leti, obnubila, obſita ten:bris loca, non pudet Philoſophum in eo gloriari, quod hæc non timeat: ——— itaque non deterret ſapientem mors, quæ propter incertos caſus coridiè imminet, & propter brevitatem vitæ nunquam longe poteſt abeſſe.*

I muſt but give a taſte in this kind, a world more inſtances might be brought out of Hea-then Authors to ſhame profeſſed Chriſtians, that have an higher ſort of Arguments againſt the fear of death, yet the ſenſe of Covenant-relation is the ſtrongeſt, and the ſureneſs of Covenant-mercies is of ſingular uſe to ſweeten thoſe bitter pangs, when the King of terrours doth appear in the moſt formidable manner, and ſtrikes its laſt ſtroke with the moſt terrible kind of death: and truly I may (with Mr. Dod) call death the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; our Saviour hath pluckt out its ſting and altered the very nature of it: I ſhall conclude this Branch with a Poem of Divine Herberts called Death.

*The Church.
pag. 180.*

*Death thou waſt once an uncouth hideous thing,
nothing but bones,
the ſad effect of ſadder groans,
Thy mouth was open, but thou couldſt nat ſing.*

*For we conſidered thee as at ſome fix
or ten years hence,
after the loſs of life and ſenſe
Fleſh being turn'd to duſt, and bones to ſticks:*

We lookt on this side of thee shooting short,
where we did find
the shells of fledge souls left behind,
Dry dust, which sheds no tears, but may extort.

But since our Saviours death did put some blood
into thy face,
thou art grown fair and full of grace,
Much in request, much sought for as a good.

For we do now behold thee gay and glad
as at dooms-day;
when souls shall wear their new array;
And all thy bones with beauty shall be clad.

Therefore we can go dye as sleep, and trust,
half that we have,
unto an honest faithful grave,
Making our pillows either down or dust.

CHAP. XIV.

IV. **T**HE fourth and last head of Directions, that I promised to propound is an answer to this Question, How a gracious soul that is interested in these mercies is to behave himself? though this be a necessary point, yet I must cut short in it, having insisted too long on the former Heads.

1. Believe and receive these mercies, *this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. is it the proposition only that is to be credited, embraced? is it not Christ and the rest of the Covenant-mercies held forth in this precious maxim, which is the sweetest flower in the Garden of Scripture, the choicest Pearl in the Word, and most glorious Star in the whole Constellation of Gospel-promises? who dare doubt what God hath spoken? and who dare refuse what God doth offer? he is so wise that he cannot be deceived, and he is so good that he will not deceive you; you may better believe God than your own sense; give glory to God by embracing these mercies, deny or dispute no longer: be not ingrateful to that Grace of God, that hath condescended so low to give you evidences, on purpose that you might believe.

De iis que cognovit, futuris, & que adhuc sub visum non cadunt, tam certum habet persuasionem cognitione predictus, ut ea magis adesse putat, quam que sunt presentia—
Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. 7.

2. Im-

2. Improve these sure mercies, make use of them in all your particular needs, if a man have a good spring he will order it for convenient supplies of many household wants, and draw it through several chanel for several uses: so a Christian must branch out the several mercies of the Covenant to his various cases and uses, as enlightning mercy to his darkness, enlivening mercy to his dulneis, pardoning mercy in case of guiltiness, purging mercy in case of strong
 2 Cor. 12 7. corruptions, — because Gods grace is sufficient for us in all exigencies; in all storms there is Sea-room enough in Gods infinite
 Phil. 4. 19. mercy for faiths full sail; our God supplies all wants; Religion is a spiritual bond to tye God and a soul together; and a Christian in the exercise of his Religion singles out that in God which is needful to him on all occasions: the life of faith is a retailing of Divine commodities, as the Covenant of grace gives a soul a title thereto (as it were) by whole-sale. Oh let the heirs of promise improve these mercies.

3. Be content with these mercies, these are sufficient to make you happy, seek not further to eke out your contentment in the Creature, as though you had not enough in having these; what a strange passage is that of good *Abraham*, Gen: 15. 2. Lord God, saith he, *what wilt thou give me seeing I go childless?* give him! why had not God given him himself, and was not that an exceeding great reward? ver. 1. and could

Abraham

Abraham desire more? O yes, all this is nothing unless God give him a Child; he takes no notice of this in comparison of a Son; this is just our case, let God give us himself and Covenant-mercies, we can overlook all these in our distempered fits; and look upon them as of no worth if he deny us some outward comfort that our hearts are set upon: but this is our sin and shame, cannot God himself content us? can we go from Covenant-mercies to mend us with common-mercies? nay do we not thereby weaken our interest, dishonour our portion; and disengage God to help us? is not God a jealous God, and can he endure to have any rival with him in your affections.

4. Walk worthy of these sure mercies; oh do not disparage them by your unsuitable carriage; live after the rate of heirs of Promise, walk exactly, spiritually, self-denyingly and soul-resignedly, God hath given himself and these best blessings to you in mercy: oh give your selves and best services to God in a way of duty; if you give your selves to God as a whole burnt-offering; 'tis but a reasonable service; for he hath given you more than you can give back to him: walk holily, steadily, cheerfully as becomes these mercies, do much for God that hath done so much for you, let nothing discourage or disquiet your spirits, since you have mercies, sure mercies to lodge in your bosomes; why should that

*Cum id præ-
stiterit gra-
tia ut mo-
veretur pec-
cata, quid
aliud facie-
mus si vi-
vemus in
eo, nisi ut
gratis si-
mus in gratia.*
Aug.
de Sp. et
lib. c. 60.
Rom. 12.1.

Col. 1. 10.

Eph. 4. 1.

1 Thef. 2.

12.

soul be sad that enjoyeth an interest in the father of consolations, the purchaser of salvation, and comforting spirit? sure mercies with propriety beget solid comfort and assurance for ever. Oh Christians, learn the lessons much inculcated to walk worthy of God, of your vocation, relation, and this Kingdom.

5. Be active and passive for these mercies, they cost Christ dear to purchase them; do not you think any thing too dear to do or endure for promoting or preserving of them: kindness is very endearing to a grateful heart; your pains cannot be spent to better purpose than in the cause of God, we must always be paying our debt, though we can never fully pay it, we must be behind-hand with God, but let a soul under the sense of mercies sweat blood for God, if he call to it: you sow not in a barren soul, as showers of mercy ingage you to fruitfulness; so an abundant crop of mercy will be your sure reward: and in your saddest Winter you shall have the sweetest harvest of mercy; if Christians knew what grapes of Coelestial *Canaan* they should taste in their Wilderness-sufferings for Christ, they would not be so afraid of them as they are; these mercies run most freely and sweetly when other streams are stopt: fear not sufferings, mercies will meet and support you.

6. Plead these mercies for your posterity, though you should leave your Children thousands a year, yet these Covenant-mercies will

will be the best portion ; you cannot assure your estates to your heirs, but these are sure mercies, so that if you take hold of Gods Covenant, plead it, live up to it, you shall have the benefit of these your selves, and some (at least) of your Children and Successours shall enjoy the same mercies, for God will remember these unto a thousand generations, though he be not bound to every individual soul of your natural offspring, however the Scripture fully shews that this is the surest way to obtain a portion for your Children ; tell God, they are more his than yours, you are but Nurses for his Children ; tell the Lord, that thou must dye and leave them, but he lives for ever, intreat him to be their loving everlasting Father ; tell him that though thou leave them something in the world, yet that is neither suitable nor durable, but these sure mercies will not fail them, and comfort your hearts for your house and family with the last words of dying *David*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. oh labour to transmit your title unto God to future generations, as the two Tribes and an half did to future Ages by their Altar *Ed.* *Joh.* 24. 24, 28. see 1 *Chron.* 28. 9.

7. Breathe after a full possession of these sure mercies, they are from everlasting to everlasting, follow them to the spring in admiration and thankfulness, and follow this stream of Covenant-mercies to the Ocean of Eternity ; indeed the streams are in time to the Sons and Daughters of men,

but the original is without a beginning, in God eternal thoughts of love, and the end is without end in those everlasting embraces in Heaven; oh long to see the end, if these mercies be so sweet here, what will they be in Heaven, in their proper Element, as it were? oh that blessed state, that Paradise of pleasure, that joy of our Lord, *Abraham's* bosome, an house not made with hands, a City with foundations, a Crown, a Kingdom! art thou the happy product of these sure mercies of *David*? do these mercies bring forth such felicity? oh happy day that my soul hath an interest in these sure mercies, but how long shall my soul be kept from the full possession of these mercies? when shall I come and appear before God? how long shall I sojourn in *Mesech*, and be detained from my Fathers plenteous Table above? shall not a Captive long for his deliverance, and a young heir for his full inheritance? and shall not my soul long to be with Christ above? shall my body be so weary, and hath not my soul more cause to be weary of its burden and absence from home? shall creatures groan, and shall not I much more to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God? shall the Spirit and the Bride say come, and shall not my soul that hears these things, eccho, come? shall he say himself, I come quickly, and shall not I answer *Amen*, even so come Lord Jesus, Come Lord, I long to see the end of these wonders of grace, I much desire

Rom. 8.
19—23.

Rev. 22.
17, 20.

to enjoy those mercies which eye hath not seen, ear heard, or heart conceived, after another manner than here I am capable; come, my God, I beseech thee shew me thy face; and because none can see thy face and live, let me dye that I may see thy face, and be swallowed up in the Ocean of mercy, whence these Covenant-mercies flow. Dear Lord, either come down to me, or take me up to thee: *Make haste my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.* Song 8. 14.

Thus I have at last dispatcht this sixth Use of Instruction and Direction to sinners and Saints.

CHAP. XV.

VII. **T**HE seventh Use of Encouragement, Comfort and Refreshment, and here's an abundant spring opened to revive all the heirs of Promise. But because I want room, and because much of that which hath been already delivered tends this way, I shall rather improve it, to excite the people of God and heirs of Promise to the great and sweet duty of thankfulness.

And here I might elarge upon the Nature, Use, Comfort and acceptance of the duty of praise in the account of God and men; but I must wave that, and only insist on some few particulars that concern the nature of these mercies, which may engage us to be thankful, which are these,

1. They are free-mercies, they may be had without money or price, saith this

Quanti O homines profiteremini vos esse emptos, si salus aeterna venderetur! ne si patrum quidam qui totus aereo ut est in favulis fuit fluente, quis dedit, pro salute justum premium numeraverit. Clem Alex. adm. ad gentis.

Prophet here, free-grace was the Fountain, Cause, and Original of these; he had mercy because he would have mercy; nothing moved his bowels of mercy on our part; free-grace had no impul-

sive cause but it self: when you are to purchase these mercies, the price it fallen to just

just nothing, he gives liberally and upbraids not : oh what cause of thankfulness and admiration ?

2. They are Dear mercies, this doth not contradict the former, they are dear to Jesus Christ, but free to us, they are purchased with the warmest blood in the veins of the Son of God ; yea, he thought his dearest heart-blood well bestowed to purchase these sure mercies ; he sees of the Travel of his soul and is well satisfied ; the fruits of his purchase are the joy of his heart ; he thinks these worth all his pains, pain and dolours ; God the father is well pleased and accounts these mercies a valuable fruit of his Sons purchase ; and shall not we be thankful ?

3. They are Deep mercies, high and broad, and have all the dimensions of greatness, *Psal. 36. 5, 6.* these mercies can fetch up a drooping despairing soul out of the grave, yea out of Hell ; be the soul sunk as low as sin can make it in this World, these mercies can fetch it up, and raise it out of the grave and pit of silence, and save to the uttermost : Oh what a long arm of mercy hath been reached forth unto your troubled hearts in your low estate ? and doth not this deserve thankfulness ?

*Aque quo
sunt profun-
diores, co-
suet puri-
ores, quoni-
am & crassa
& terrea
materia in
profundum
depressa est,
--hinc pro-
funditatem
a marum
borea.
Ezek. 34.*

18.

4. They are Designed mercies, purposely designed, aimed and intended to set forth riches of grace, the infinite contrivance of the blessed God to magnifie riches of love to sinners ; 'tis true God intended to set

off his power, wisdom, justice, truth, but he hath magnified his mercy above all the rest of his name; it's beyond the rest of his works, the attributes of God are set very high, but mercy sits in the chiefest Throne; he declares to Angels and Saints what he can do for sorry man: oh advance free-grace.

5. They are Dignifying mercies, such honour have all his Saints; oh what an height doth God raise his Covenant-Children to? he deals bountifully with them, by
 2 Sam. 23. these Covenant-mercies was David raised
 1. up on high, and therefore confesseth, that God regarded him according to the estate of a man of high degree, 1 Chron. 17. 17. and truly it is the highest preferment in the World to partake of these sure mercies: and therefore we have great cause of thankfulness.

6. They are Sanctifying mercies, they season all other mercies, and make common mercies to become Covenant-mercies; yea, they make crosses, mercies, they perfume the most offensive griefs, and are like Moses's Tree that sweetens the Waters of Marah, if you poure a pail of Water on the floor, it seems a little Sea, but pour it into the Ocean it's swallowed up and seems nothing; so afflictions out of the Covenant are intolerable, but as in Covenant-love they are inconsiderable, the depth of mercies drowns the depth of miseries, and is not this ground of thankfulness?

7. They

7. They are Separating mercies, hereby are Gods-Children distinguished from all the people that are upon the face of the Earth, Exod. 33.
16, 19. even in their finding grace in Gods sight, and his presence with them, and making his goodness pass before them: if there be any discriminating mercies for any of the Children of men, as protection, provision, direction, these Covenant-mercies usher them in, and sort them out to the heirs of Promise, and if they be good for them, they shall partake thereof; then bless God.

8. They are Sealing mercies, they signify exhibit and represent Gods love to the soul, where-ever these mercies are laid up in the breast of a sinner, that soul is the *Jedidiah*, or beloved of Gods soul, they testify such a souls relation to God, and Gods affection to it; wicked men are strangers to Covenant-love, Gods people are the proper subjects of these endeared thoughts of Gods heart, and are you of that number? oh give God the glory of this mercy.

9. They are Extensive mercies, they are exceeding broad, they have wide arms, and embrace all the heirs of Promise, not a gracious soul (though never so poor) is left out, yea they are largely extended to every Christians state, case, exigency, and necessity: let doubts be what they will; let fears, falls, faults be sad and soul-astonishing, yet these sure mercies will answer all, they are commensurate and proportionated

to

to all conditions of soul, body, estate, relations ; oh bless God for them.

10. They are Comprehensive* mercies, they contain all the good that God promisseth, or a soul needeth, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, peace and pardon, all our fresh springs are herein, the good things of this life and of a better, and there are many precious things put forth by this Sun of righteousness in a Covenant-way. Oh what cause have we to bless God and admire free-grace, that hath not only given us the spiritual good things of his Kingdom, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ; but temporal good things by a sure and sweet tenure ; so that these sure mercies of the Covenant insure unto us the corporal mercies that are good for us ; and and after another and better manner than any uncovenanted persons (though never so great) can enjoy them ; for in a Covenant-way believers do enjoy common-mercies ;

1. More refinedly, taken off the dregs of cares and sorrows, *Prov. 10. 22.* a Saint's bread, (though never so coarse) is of the finest of the wheat, and he is satisfied with honey out of the rock : yea they come,

2. More really other comforts are but seeming comforts ; as man walketh in a vain shew, so what he enjoys is but a dream, but outward comforts coming through the blood of Christ are solid substantial refreshments : again they come more,

3. Sweetly, have not those prickles and stings that worldly things

Psal. 81. 16.

Luk. 8. 18.

Psal. 39.

things have to natural men. Oh the peace and quietness that a Christian enjoys with outward comforts ; and further comforts come to a Child of God more

4. Serviceably, the creature doth homage to its Maker and Masters Children, so that what they have is for their good and doth them good : and comforts also come more

5. Satisfyingly, a Godly man is more contented with his little than the men of the world can be with abundance, *a little, that the righteous hath is better than the riches of many wicked*, Psal. 37. 16. and then a Child of God enjoys his comforts in a Covenant-way more safely, he needs not fear want, *bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure*, Isai. 55. 1. God is the Christians purse-bearer, and it's in safer hands than in his own : and they are here more,

7. Lastingly, we shall have corporal mercies as long as we need them, and when we need them not, they shall be swallowed in eternal enjoyments. O therefore let the Saints of God be truly thankful, let the high praises of God be in their mouths ; this is the chief rent and reasonable Tribute that God expects for these sure mercies ; sacrifice these sacrifices of thanksgiving, take this Cup of salvation, and give God the praise that's due unto his name. Begin that work here in time, which shall be fully managed by the ransomed of the Lord to all Eternity : this, this shall be the burden of the Saints triumphant Song in Heavenly Mansions, that

glorious

glorious pallace shall ring, and eccho with
 the blessed note of mercy mercy, free-grace
 laid the foundation, and grace, grace only
 lays the top-stone of Saints glory. Oh how
 will God be admired by and in all, that
 believe at that day? well sirs, begin those
Hosanna's here, that will be seconded with
Hallelujahs hereafter; speak well of your
 gracious God, admire this new-Covenant
 design, and let him have all the glory of this
 blessed contrivance, so shall you accomplish
 Gods end, and evidence your Covenant-inter-
 est in these sure mercies of *David*.

Thus though these Divine graces which
 adorn the Temple of a Christians breast do
 sometimes disappear, and sin costs the soul
 some tears, yet the gracious soul hath abun-
 dant ground of thankfulness for the whole
 transaction: take it in Divine *Herbert's* Poem
 of Church-floor.

Mark you the floor? that square and speckled
(stone
which looks so firm and strong
is Patience;

And th' other black and grave, wherewith each
(one
is checker'd all along,
Humility;

The gentle rising, which on either hand
leads to the Quire above,
is Confidence:

But

The Sure Mercies of David.

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*But the sweet Cement, which in one sure band
tyes the whole frame, is Love
and Charity.*

*Hither sometimes sin steals, and stains
the Marbles neat and curious veins :
But all is cleansed when the Marble weeps,
Sometimes death puffing at the door,
blows all the dust about the floor :
But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps.
Blest be the Architect, whose art
could build so strong in a weak heart.*

FINIS.